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ABSTRACT

This booklet is the 34th edition of "Experiences of Enterprising Teachers" and describes the 42 projects selected to receive National Awards for Teaching Economics. Seventy-four teachers from the primary through the senior high school level developed the curricula to help their students understand how the world works, today, tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow. Guidelines are provided on how to apply for the National Awards for Teaching Economics program. The summaries provided are a sampling of each project selected for recognition. Also included are the National Economic Standards and the Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics. Full texts of first through fourth place award-winning projects are available through Interlibrary Loan with the Milner Library of Illinois State University in Normal, IL, housing the entire collection. There are five parts divided into primary level (grades K-3), intermediate level (grades 4-6), middle/junior high school level (grades 7-9), senior high school level (grades 10-12), and an open category. Winners for first-, second-, third-, and fourth-places are described along with honorable mention summaries in each of the grade levels. (EH)

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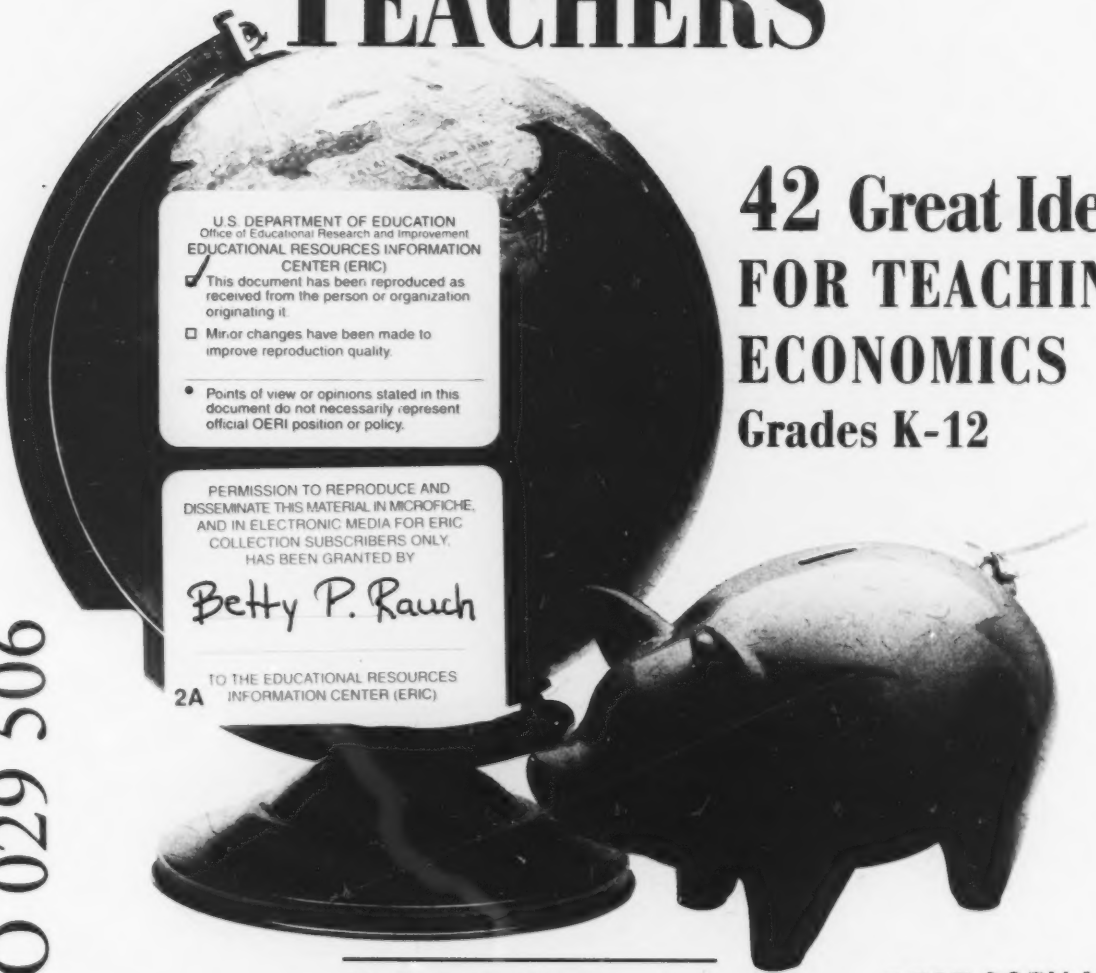
EXPERIENCES OF ENTERPRISING TEACHERS



42 Great Ideas FOR TEACHING ECONOMICS

Grades K-12

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VOLUME 34

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THE 1995 - 1996
National Awards
for Teaching Economics

EXPERIENCES OF ENTERPRISING TEACHERS

42 Great Ideas

FOR TEACHING ECONOMICS

Grades K-12

Writer/Editor
Dot Nuechterlein

Economist
James Dick

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VOLUME 34

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Prof. Dot Nuechterlein, designer, editor, and chief writer, is a consulting sociologist affiliated with Valparaiso University. Along with teaching sociology, she writes for publications concerned with education, women's roles, and aging, and formerly served as assistant director and editor of the teachers' guides for the National Council's "Choices & Changes" program. At present she is a consultant to the Indiana State Department of Health for programs in long-term care.

Dr. James Dick, who wrote the economics highlights, is a professor in the Department of Teacher Education, College of Education, at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He is the co-director of the Center for Economic Education on that campus and has served on several National Council committees. A participant in the Trainer of Trainers Seminar for Economics International, Dick is co-author of *Civics and Government: Focus on Economics*.

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NATIONAL AWARDS FOR TEACHING ECONOMICS

Objectives:

To provide recognition for outstanding economic education teaching practices at the elementary, middle, junior, and senior high school level.

To encourage teachers to document and report innovative and creative teaching experiences for replication by others.

To stimulate more teachers to incorporate economic concepts and related critical thinking skills in the classes they teach.

To recognize the creative and positive impact on students, schools, and communities of incorporating economic principles across the curricula.

Message From the President of the National Council on Economic Education

This is the 34th edition of *Experiences of Enterprising Teachers*, describing the 42 projects selected to receive National Awards for Teaching Economics. The National Council on Economic Education salutes the 74 teachers from the primary through the senior high school level who developed these remarkable curricula–because these award-winning projects are the way teachers help students understand how the world works, today, tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow.

We wish to express our gratitude and appreciation to the sponsor of this special program for over 20 years, the International Paper Company Foundation. IPCF's consistent and generous support for the National Awards for Teaching Economics has enabled the NCEE to acknowledge and reward teachers who, every year, help thousands of students become productive members of the work force, responsible citizens, knowledgeable consumers, prudent savers and investors, and effective decision makers. We are particularly grateful to the staff members of the IPCF and the International Paper Company, who, each year, contribute time and effort to make the awards ceremony special for all participants.

We are indebted as well to our distinguished Committee of Judges for their conscientious selections from a wide pool of high quality applicants. We thank the staff of the Milner Library and the NATE Depository at Illinois State University for their tireless work on behalf of the annual judging and the National Awards Collection. And we owe a great debt of gratitude to Dot Nuechterlein, editor/author, and James Dick, economist, for their dedication in ensuring that this wonderful resource will be of real value to teachers. I also wish to thank our National Council staff for their extraordinary efforts and dedication to all aspects of the National Awards for Teaching Economics.

Ultimately, it is the dedicated efforts of our affiliated Councils and Centers for Economic Education throughout the country, who work with teachers and encourage them to submit entries, that assure that award-winning teachers are appropriately honored for outstanding classroom performance.

Finally, our sincerest thanks to all the teachers themselves, who enthusiastically and creatively embrace their charge articulated by the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead: "The business of education is the creation of the future."

Robert F. Duvall, Ph.D.
President and CEO

HOW TO APPLY

Teachers at all grade levels, from public and private schools, are eligible for the National Awards for Teaching Economics program. Appliction forms are available from the National Council on Economic Education office by calling 800/338-1192 ext. 725.

A SIMPLE GUIDE FOR ORGANIZING AN ENTRY

The key to developing a successful application is to clearly state the objectives, include economic concepts, describe the activities, and show how the objectives were achieved. Award-winning projects focus on what students learn about our economy and on the reasoning skills they develop.

An application should include:

Cover Page	Title of project, grade level and/or subject area
Abstract	One or two pages describing the unit or project
Rationale	A statement indicating why it was important to provide this learning experience to these students and relating the experience to economic concerns of individuals or society
Objectives	Desired outcomes may be stated in the manner required by the school system and should include economic concepts (i.e., natural resources, capital, labor, money, supply, demand, scarcity . . .) as well as cognitive and/or affective changes in student learning
Procedures and Content	Description of teaching strategies and classroom activities that helped students meet the stated objectives Suggested organization: (a) State objectives and economic concepts, (b) Describe teaching strategies and classroom activities, (c) List materials and time required
Evaluation	Evidence of student achievement such as pre/post test data, teacher and student evaluations, or other methods used to determine student achievement and affective learning
Summary	Teacher conclusions regarding the unit, program, or project
Support Materials	Examples of student work, photos, brief VHS videotapes, and other evidence may be included with each lesson or in a separate section

Editor's Comments

One hallmark of great teaching, it has been said, is "an intense passion to share with others what one has received from others." Such intensity seems to nearly jump off the pages of the materials submitted by the award-winning teachers whose work was honored in the 34th National Awards program. Most educators noted in this publication are not highly-trained, professional economists. Instead, having learned the value of economic principles for addressing the challenges of life, they have used every tool they could think of to pass along that understanding to their students. As a result, they have succeeded in enhancing both the present and the future for individuals, families, and communities.

These summaries are but a sampling of each project, and I heartily encourage you to borrow the full collection through Interlibrary Loan. Specific information and call letters may be found on the title page for each grade level.

My thanks go to President Duvall and the staff of the National Council for inviting me to take part in this process once again. My university students benefit, too, from these lessons in economic education.

Dot Nuechterlein
Valparaiso University

Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics

The National Council on Economic Education (in partnership with the National Association of Economic Educators and the Foundation for Teaching Economics) has produced a set of curriculum standards based on the essential principles of economics, titled Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics. Each of the 20 content standards, developed by a panel of economists and economic educators, includes a rationale for its inclusion; benchmarks indicating attainment levels for students in grades 4, 8, and 12; samples of what students can do to enhance or demonstrate their understanding of economics; and correlation of existing EconomicsAmerica publications to the standards.

Summaries of the standards appear on the next page. Each award-winning project in this publication includes a "Highlights of Economics Content" section that describes the underlying economic content of the project and links the unit to the relevant Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics. The activities in the projects provide additional ways for students to enhance or demonstrate mastery of the listed content standards.

To purchase Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics, contact the National Council on Economic Education (800/338-1192 ext. 763), a State Council on Economic Education, or a nearby Center for Economic Education.

The National Economics Standards

1. Productive resources are limited. Therefore, people cannot have all the goods and services they want; as a result, they must choose some things and give up others.
2. Effective decision making requires comparing the additional costs of alternatives with the additional benefits. . . . few choices are "all or nothing" decisions.
3. People . . . must choose which method to use to allocate different kinds of goods and services.
4. People respond predictably to . . . incentives.
5. Voluntary exchange occurs only when all parties expect to gain.
6. When individuals, regions, and nations specialize in what they can produce at the lowest cost and then trade with others, both production and consumption increase.
7. Markets exist when buyers and sellers interact. This interaction determines market prices and thereby allocates scarce resources.
8. Prices send signals and provide incentives to buyers and sellers.
9. Competition among sellers lowers costs and prices, and encourages producers to produce more of what consumers are willing and able to buy. Competition among buyers increases prices and allocates goods and services to those people who are willing and able to pay for them.
10. Institutions evolve in market economies to help individuals and groups accomplish their goals. Banks, labor unions, corporations, legal systems, and not-for-profit organizations are examples. . A different kind of institution, clearly defined and enforced property rights, is essential to a market economy.
11. Money makes it easier to trade, borrow, save, invest, and compare the value of goods and services.
12. Interest rates, adjusted for inflation, rise and fall to balance the amount saved with the amount borrowed.
13. Income for most people is determined by the market value of the productive resources they sell.
14. Entrepreneurs are people who take the risks of organizing productive resources to make goods and services. Profit provides an important incentive.
15. Investment in factories, machinery, new technology, and in the health, education, and training of people can raise future standards of living.
16. There is an economic role for government in a market economy whenever the benefits of a government policy outweigh its costs. Governments often provide for national defense, address environmental concerns, define and protect private property rights.
17. Costs of government policies sometimes exceed benefits. This may occur because of incentives facing voters, government officials, and government employees, because of actions by special interest groups . . . or because social goals other than economic efficiency are being pursued.
18. A nation's overall levels of income, employment, and prices are determined by the interaction of spending and production decisions made by all households, firms, government agencies, and others in the economy.
19. Unemployment imposes costs on individuals and nations. Unexpected inflation imposes costs on many people and benefits some others because it arbitrarily redistributes purchasing power. Inflation can reduce the rate of growth of national living standards.
20. Federal government budgetary policy and the Federal Reserve System's monetary policy influence the overall levels of employment, output, and prices.

Part One
Primary Level
Grades K-3

Full texts of first place through fourth place award-winning projects are available through Interlibrary Loan. Borrow them free through your library. School, college/university, and public libraries provide this service.

The Milner Library at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois, houses the entire collection. (OCLC symbol IAI.) Projects may be requested only through Interlibrary Loan.

Call numbers for Primary Level exemplary projects 1995-1996 are:

First Place

Davis, Geanie, & Deborah Shearer — HB74.8.N38p1996S54
Ginger Town Economics: A "Runaway" Success

Second Place

Donahue, Joan W. — HB74.8.N38p1996D66
Tennessee Treasures

Third Place

Rogers, Marsha K. — HB74.8.N38p1996R64
Kids 'R' Us Coloring Book

Fourth Place

Smith, Corliss — HB74.8.N38p1996S65
Economics is No Tall Tale

1st Place - Primary

"Ginger Town Economics: A 'Runaway' Success"

Deborah Shearer and Geanie Davis
Baker Elementary School
Little Rock, Arkansas

When the Gingerbread Man, a popular children's literature hero, came to life as a puppet called Gingerbread Child, 40 kindergartners began a year-long adventure in economic literacy–and it didn't end until the Child traveled to Washington to help the President make economic policy decisions!

In recent years, said teachers Deborah Shearer and Geanie Davis, kindergarten classes had followed the Gingerbread Man when he ran away early in the school year so that they could get acquainted with different locations and meet the staff and other workers; and every year, they would return to their classrooms for milk and gingerbread cookies.

This time, however, it was the Gingerbread "Child" they followed, who left notes for them to meet the many human resources of the school; and this time, when they got back to the rooms, they experienced a scarcity situation: there were not enough cookies for all the students to satisfy their wants. The economic education project was underway.

The teachers planned the curriculum to cover the entire year, but designed each lesson to be independent, so that the concepts could be taught individually. It is important to begin economic education in kindergarten, they said, because "our society and culture will probably change, and technology will definitely change; but the basic economic problem of scarcity and the need to make wise allocation decisions will not. Children who learn to make wise choices will become adults who make wise decisions."

Since young learners need plenty of time and opportunity to absorb and experience new ideas, teaching the economic vocabulary and ideas became

part of the instruction in math, science, language arts, social studies, physical education, art, and music. The key was to tie new ideas to personal experiences, said the teachers, so they kept parents informed of each activity, encouraging them to reinforce the concepts at home.

After observing the interdependence of the teachers and school staff and discussing how these workers produced goods and services, students began using a token system as currency to "pay" for the jobs they did in their classrooms, which they could then "spend" in the class store. Next they brought sales receipts from home showing tax amounts, so the teachers could help them understand why people pay this money to provide schools and teachers, streets, parks, police and fire fighters, and other community needs. On field trips they saw how taxes were collected, and they apparently learned this lesson well: one mother reported her son would ask how much tax was paid when they did family shopping.

One unit focused on public goods and services to help students see the connection between personal self-interest and societal goals. They set up Ginger Town, elected a town council, began collecting taxes as each consumer shopped at the class store, and used that tax money to buy public goods for the classrooms, such as the puzzles, books, toys, and games kept in the economic resources center.

Gingerbread cookie dough was the basis for a lesson in production and consumption. The students were producers when they prepared dough to sell at the school's Christmas Bazaar–but they became consumers when they baked and ate some of the cookies themselves!

Highlights of Economics Content

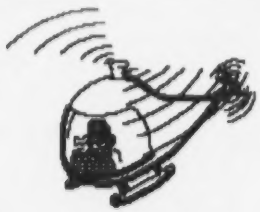
A gingerbread man puppet took a group of kindergarten students around their school and into the community to learn about scarcity, choice, opportunity costs, producers, and consumers. The students, in preparing for a winter holiday program and school bazaar, wrote economics lyrics for seasonal tunes and baked gingerbread cookies; they also heard from guest speakers who talked about factors of production, specialization, and interdependence.

Parents were asked to help teach about taxes and public goods and services, and these concepts were reinforced through field trips to local and state government offices. The kindergarteners practiced decision-making skills throughout the unit.

The teachers described this unit as a "runaway success."

Links to National Economics Standards
1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 16

James Dick



A highlight of the year was an original play presented at the Bazaar. The Gingerbread Child traveled all over the world with Santa, discovering that economics is the same everywhere. Then the Child arrived at the North Pole and observed cooperation, interdependence, and assembly line production at its best in the elves toy workshop. When Mrs. Claus, a specialist, said that gingerbread cookies are a favorite of all children, they had all the motivation they needed for preparing and selling the cookie mix and for decorating recipe cards with gingerbread man stamps.

"The students' belief in the Gingerbread Child's concern with their ability to make wise choices contributed to the success of the project," stated Shearer and Davis.

From time to time the Child disappeared, leaving a note directing them where to go for the next expedition. In one adventure they followed him to the school district's food processing plant, and another time he turned up in the Superintendent's office. They chased him to a local fire station, to the post office where they mailed letters to themselves, and even to the state capitol building, where they had a tour and learned more about how taxes supported public goods and services.

Sometimes it was a resource speaker who found the Child and returned to school with it. A police officer, a detective, and two mounted police officers were popular visitors, with the students especially enjoying the very special natural resources used by the mounted police–their horses! Students could relate easily to the public service the police provide, particularly since two were fathers of class members.

One exciting adventure for the Gingerbread Child was his arrival one day in an Army helicopter. "The children were spellbound to see him and the helicopter land on the school campus," said the teachers, and after he was returned to them, "the pilot allowed all the children to climb aboard for a hands-on exploration of a public good!"

The last step of the Gingerbread Child's journey was the round trip to Washington, D.C. The teachers arranged with a parent who was a personal friend of the President to take the puppet to D.C. and have his picture taken at the White House. Over the course of the year the Child had become so real to the students that they had no doubt he was indeed in Washington; and, since he had taught them so much about economics, they were sure he was giving the President good economic advice, too.

"It is incredible to receive an award for something I enjoy so much!"

In conclusion, the teachers wrote: "The most important thing about our project was that it worked, and our students are now better prepared to face the economic problems in their future."

2nd Place - Primary

"Tennessee Treasures"

Joan W. Donahue
Highland Oaks Elementary School
Memphis, Tennessee

As they arrived on the first day of school, the 21 students in Joan Donahue's classroom met "Tanna C. Bear," a little brown plush toy that would help them observe a special year. Tennessee, their home state, was 200 years old, and since third graders love celebrating birthdays, Donahue decided it would be the perfect way to encourage them to learn about economics, geography, history, natural resources, and all the rest of the curriculum.

On that first day, students learned how to write a letter, a skill they would use for the entire project. Next they became familiar with the economics concepts they needed, such as goods and services, decision making, and specialization.

The bear informed the class, through the teacher, that he would like to see the state of Tennessee, but he didn't have a car and was afraid of getting lost. The students couldn't take him themselves, but with the help of their parents, they decided that each would mail a bear to a different part of the state where they had relatives

and friends. They wrote letters to accompany the bears, asking for information about industries, crops, and other features of those areas. Some of the mailing boxes included disposable cameras, while others asked for postcards.

While they waited for the results, students used library books to research information about the state, then learned the history and economic importance of Memphis and their own county. When a traveling bear and the data about an area came back, the class found the location on a huge wall map and filed the information. When everyone had responded, they produced a video featuring the pictures.

"I get my motivation to teach from the learners, and they kept me motivated all year long!"

Another appreciation for the state came from the replies of prominent Tennesseans when the students sent them letters asking, "What do you like most about Tennessee?" Responses came from 28 persons, including the Governor, several mayors, a U.S. Senator, sports figures, college presidents, cultural leaders, and entreprenuers. In order to share these treasures with others in the school, the class voted to establish "The Three Stars Book Company"–named after the state flag's three stars –and developed a coloring book picturing their choices.

Parents were pleased with the project, with the interest their children found in studying their state, and the economic knowledge they gained. Newspaper writers publicized the project, and one businessman was so impressed with what the class had achieved that he sent a monetary gift, enabling them to buy more books about Tennessee for the school library.

The students will never forget the year they said: "Happy Birthday, Tennessee."

This year-long interdisciplinary unit developed to celebrate the bicentennial of Tennessee integrated state history, geography, basic economic concepts, entrepreneurship, mathematics, and higher level thinking skills into the production of a musical video and coloring book. The book highlighted many famous natives of the state, geographical landmarks, historical sites, and Tennessee's role in international trade.

Students developed plans for financing, producing, and distributing their products. Parents were actively involved in many of the learning activities.

Links to National Economics Standards 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14

James Dick

3rd Place - Primary

"Kids 'R' Us Coloring Book"

Marsha K. Rogers
Lincoln Elementary School
Ardmore, Oklahoma

Before the school year started, Marsha Rogers planned an active-learning project so her 20 third-graders would learn economic principles through a small profit-making venture.

However, her students had other ideas. They wanted to earn much more money so that they could contribute to several children's charities in the community. She was somewhat skeptical, she said, since her eight- and nine-year-old students had only limited understanding of economics, and their math skills were still developing. How could they take on the challenge of a significant classroom business, keeping track of market analysis and account ledgers, not to mention profit/loss margins?

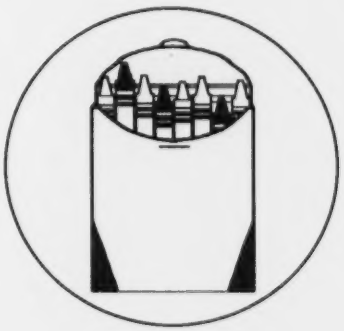
"I thought my students had unrealistic expectations and would be disappointed. I was wrong. I had forgotten that when it comes to student capacity to learn, expect the unexpected."

"When students shoot for the moon, get out of the way!"

After a guest speaker from the local children's shelter told the class about caring for runaways and abuse victims, the next guest was the city manager, who explained that some of the town's tax money supported local charities, too.

Another speaker told about her service job in the travel industry and encouraged the students to always look for work in an area they enjoy. They studied goods and services by interviewing workers, then had a treasure hunt to the nearby historical museum.

Finally they were ready to choose a product for their new business: a coloring book of community highlights, targeted to "kids who were bored and wanted something fun to do."



They sold advertising so that all of the profit from book sales would go towards their goal, recorded a public service broadcast at a radio station, and took turns selling from a booth at the school carnival.

In the end, they sold nearly 500 books, realizing a profit of $268. Then they turned into consumers and visited a discount store to buy games and other items for the children's ward at a hospital. The remaining funds went to the child abuse prevention program and planting a tree in the outdoor classroom to benefit other children as well.

Rogers believes in economic education, she said, because students are natural consumers and aspiring business persons: this is the optimal time to introduce a subject that will impact their future. It is also an excellent way to integrate all subject areas, including citizenship education.

In this project, students used their understanding of scarcity, opportunity costs, and factors of production to develop a classroom business. Community representatives, media, and literature were incorporated into the instructional strategies. Students practiced decision making as producers and consumers, and cooperative learning was emphasized throughout the unit.

Students used math skills to prepare balance sheets for recording business transactions. They learned about specialization and interdependence as they produced paper airplanes, and the role of government when they met with local officials.

The unit concluded with the students making a coloring book they marketed to others in the school, using their profits for community charities.

Links to National Economics Standards 1, 2, 5, 6, 14, 16

James Dick

4th Place - Primary

"Economics is No Tall Tale"

Corliss Smith
Louisa E. Perritt Primary School
Arkedelphia, Arkansas

Kindergarten teacher Corliss Smith is a strong believer in the statement, "Children learn by doing." The reason five- and six-year-old students ask over and over, "WHY can't I have it?" is because they do not have the knowledge of basic economic concepts that will help them understand the factors of our everyday lives.

To assist them in developing critical thinking skills and learn to make wise decisions, she prepared an economics unit that replicated the typical experiences of earning salaries and deciding how to exchange that money for goods and services to satisfy economic wants. Each experience was followed by discussion and explanation, then applied to other situations in the real world and in literature.

The project began when the 18 students chose a job from a list of familiar occupations, such as secretary, police officer, teacher, librarian, disc jockey, banker, custodian, bus driver, and so on. Each position had duties that contributed to the classroom. For example, the police officers monitored behavior in the bathrooms, librarians kept track of

how many books the students read at home and made sure all shelves were straightened, and a banker paid out weekly salaries of 25 cents, with daily bonuses for good behavior. Each week the jobs rotated, so that every student had an opportunity to try a number of them.

Classroom stores were set up each week so that students could spend the money they earned on toys, books, candy, jewelry, or snacks. After shopping, the class talked about an economic concept related to their shopping experiences.

"The very mention of the word economics brought smiles to their faces and the most willing attitudes any teacher could ever desire."

The following week, this concept would be reviewed and related to a book or another activity in math, science, art, or social studies.

Folk and tall tales provided a check on whether students could apply the economic concepts. The Bremen Town Musicians illustrated economic wants; The Fisherman and His Wife explained unlimited wants; scarcity was the lesson in The Gingerbread Boy; decision making and choices were taught by The Three Wishes; The Shoemaker and the Elves showed goods and services; consumers and producers was the theme of The Little Red Hen; and Stone Soup told the tale of interdependence.

Since pencil and paper tests are not appropriate for kindergarten students, Smith used an improvisation to evaluate their understanding of what they learned, and she was pleased with the final results. "My students are our nation's future decision makers," she said. "When teaching economic ideas, I am providing opportunities for them to practice decision-making skills."

This unit used classroom jobs and businesses, shopping, trips, children's literature, and improvisation to teach students how a society produces and exchanges goods and services to satisfy economic wants.

Scarcity, choice, interdependence, money, and opportunity cost were illustrated through tradebooks, and folk tales and tall stories were carefully integrated into the basic economics content. Kindergarten students then used these stories to demonstrate their understanding of economics.

Links to National Economics Standards 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 11

James Dick

Honorable Mention - Primary

All eight primary honorable mention units shared a focus on teaching K-3 students basic economic concepts of scarcity, choice, opportunity costs, specialization, productivity, and interdependence. Making decisions and creating classroom businesses, where students became entrepreneurs to apply their understanding of the concepts, were other themes in common. Most projects were interdisciplinary, with emphasis on language arts and reading, plus cooperative learning.

Autograph books, cookbooks, a muffin shop, quilt blocks, wooden crafts, a garage sale, ceramic pins, and a snack shop all helped students experience economics at work in a "real world" setting. Some learned about music, while others studied nursing homes, the lumber industry, cultural diversity, or other themes. These primary teachers found imaginative ways to teach basic economics to their young students.

Links to National Economics Standards 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 14

James Dick

"All Hands Working Together Make a World of Difference: A Study in Interdependence"

Jean Whitaker and Blanche J. West
Euper Lane Elementary School
Fort Smith, Arkansas

As two third-grade classes made ceramic products for a Mother's Day gift shop especially for kids, the concepts of needs, wants, and scarcity took on new meaning when a tornado hit the community and the young entrepreneurs witnessed others their age having to manage without the basic needs of shelter, clothing, and food.

The company stockholders–the students themselves–voted on whether to donate all their profits to a local mission for tornado relief, or to keep some for themselves as dividends. Recalling the project's title, one student suggested that sharing only part of what they earned probably meant each stockholder would get just a small amount, while putting all of it together could "make a world of difference" for their fellow citizens. They decided to donate the entire amount.

The company then worked hard to produce ceramic lapel pins, picture frames, night lights, ring boxes, bud vases, and other items the consumers (other students) would buy for their moms. Good quality and fair prices resulted in a total sell-out, and the corporation was able to write a check for $500 for the tornado victims.

"Many of the students had heard of LABOR, but only in connection with their mothers having babies!"

"There's nothing quite like experiencing the real thing to cause students to internalize lessons and concepts," said the teachers in summing up the project. They were also quite pleased to see the development of leadership qualities and personal responsibility, along with a growing interest in community affairs. ❑

"Economics By the Books"

Trudi Kepner
John Glenn Elementary School
St. Joseph, Missouri

Every part of the curriculum contributed to the 23 students in Trudi Kepner's third-grade class as they learned economic concepts in order to produce an economic quilt. Children's literature introduced the concepts that were then put into practice in student-run companies, each of which created its own name, designed a logo, opened a bank account, made business cards, developed advertising signs, and designed product posters.

A lawyer helped form corporations, using applications from the Secretary of State. Students learned necessary business skills, such as check-writing and updating their own personal resumes. When one company was forced out of business, the unemployed workers applied for new jobs with other companies–or they became entrepreneurs in single proprietorships.

Kepner read a book aloud each day, discussing the concepts in the story. Then a company selected the book and designed a quilt square illustrating its theme, with all designs eventually transferred to fabric and assembled into a classroom quilt. Each student also made a personal square featuring individual interests, such as ballet slippers, a baseball cap, or a whale. Two truck driver pen pals–"trucker buddies"–who wrote to them during the year, became interested in the project as they read the students' letters, so they had a square made, too.

Each company also produced and sold such products as blueberry muffins, Olympic signs, and bookmarks. Several parents contributed by visiting the classroom to tell how economics played a key role in their daily work as a research scientist for a pet food company, an engineer for the power company, and a biologist for the conservation department.

"It is important to start early in teaching economics," said Kepner. "Children can understand very complex ideas when these ideas are broken down into fundamental economic concepts." Her third-graders proved that to be true when they had high scores on their post-tests of economic knowledge.

❑

"Garage Sale Economics: Adventures of Professor Knowall"
Judy Dorer
Chambers Elementary School
and
Nancy Kidd
Superior Elementary School
East Cleveland, Ohio

A pilot program to begin preparing third-grade students for the economics education they would face the following year was tested by 25 northeastern Ohio teachers as the first unit of a new curriculum. Judy Dorer and Nancy Kidd used the materials in two schools, and reported success in teaching basic concepts to students as well as involving parents in their children's learning.

The unit began with a story about a third-grade class that needed a playground, so they approached the mayor and their city councilman asking for assistance. They were told the city could not afford to build one, but would donate land and provide part of the costs if the class could raise half of the money needed. The students then decided to hold a garage sale to achieve that goal.

Professor Knowall, a classroom guinea pig, narrated a play about economic concepts that included many characters. Other activities encouraged active learning and developed critical thinking while also enhancing reading, math, and writing skills.

A Historical Substitutes lesson was described as "perfect for parental involvement . . . a great take-home activity for linking students from school to home with active parental support." Some schools in the study held real garage sales, raising as much as $1,200 for their schools, and everyone was pleased with the economics competition, when one-third of the 44 students competing had perfect scores on the test. At the end of the term, Professor Knowall personally signed certificates for each one completing the project.

❑

"GIGGLES, Grandparents and Good Deeds"
Vicky Garrison
Caldwell Elementary School
Auburndale, Florida

"Attitudes of caring, responsibility and involvement begin at an early age," said kindergarten teacher Vicky Garrison. For that reason, she developed a community awareness project that included recycling, producing a cookbook, visiting nursing home residents, putting on a Christmas program, and raising marigolds.

GIGGLES, or Grandkids Itching for Genuinely Great Lessons in EconomicS, was a year-long effort to highlight economics principles in all parts of the curriculum. The 27 students wrote to businesses and politicians expressing their concerns and "plan of action" regarding their eventual entry into the job market, learned to set and reach goals, and began to understand how economics affects every part of individual and community

"They didn't see economics as work–they saw it as fun."

lives. Visits to senior citizens living near the school allowed them to share "both production activities and themselves with their GIGGLES grandparents," said Garrison. Over the course of the year students saw that when they helped their adopted "grandparents," they were making a contribution to the entire community.

When the class had learned concepts, they role-played or pantomimed situations based on them, or answered questions like: "Tommy, tell me about the last time you were a consumer."

A state legislator invited to visit the class was unable to come because of illness, but she sent a letter congratulating them for their work, and saying: "A kindergarten class that can raise $247.35, produce a Christmas play, and bank your profits certainly will be the smartest first grade class in the whole world."

❑

"Nighttime Economics"
Kim North, Debbie Flora, Michelle Knight, and Susan Jones
Thurman G. Smith Elementary School
Springdale, Arkansas

What could be more mysterious for many young children than the night, when they are tucked in bed and supposed to be sleeping. How exciting it is to be allowed to stay up late and to experience some of the activities that take place when the world is dark and still.

For four first-grade teachers, that curiosity led to two weeks of economic education featuring the people and animals of the night. Assembly line workers, grocery shelf stockers, and others provide goods and services during the night, the students learned, while owls and other animals are awake when the rest of us are asleep. They studied the scarcity of light, made mobiles of the moon and stars, and produced and sold pajamas for paper dolls.

After learning basic concepts, the classes decided to apply them by opening their own business, the "Dreamland Cafe," and producing "Sweet Dream" bedtime snacks to sell to families and other students. As a final event they decorated their rooms with blankets and stuffed animals and invited parents to the Cafe. With the profits, books were bought for a new day care center.

❑

"N.O.T.E.S. Open the Door to Economic Study"
Debra L. Bull
Harvey Jones Elementary School
Springdale, Arkansas

For nine weeks, the 21 third-grade music students in Debra Bull's class learned economics along with songs and musical games. Musical chairs illustrated scarcity, "Home on the Range" dealt with choices, and "I've Been Working on the Railroad" became better known as "We've Been Working on Production." Rhythm instruments represented the need for specialization and interdependence.

"I liked this a lot," said one student, "It was the funnest class I ever had."

When one student remarked over the Thanksgiving holiday that there was a scarcity of his favorite pie, the relatives were very impressed!

The students produced and sold autograph books, seeing first-hand that productivity changes according to available productive resources, such as rulers, crayons, and scissors. "They came to realize that their families were economic systems," said Bull, "and that every day these economic systems made decisions." They learned the difference between barter and purchase of goods with money and studied the circular flow of money.

Bull was pleased with the project's results. Although her first love will always be music, she said, combining music with economics made learning enjoyable. "I want these students to 'break the cycle' and become more than they ever thought they could. With a basic understanding of economics, there is hope for the future of our community and nation."

❑

"T.R.E.E.S.: Trees Recycled Earn Economic $"

Melody Key
and Jo Vanderspikken
George Elementary School
Springdale, Arkansas

Realizing that their five-year-old students knew little about forestry and the "tree"mendous impact tree and lumber production have in their local area, kindergarten teachers Melody Key and Jo Vanderspikken developed a six-week integrated unit on basic economic terms and concepts applied to the forest industry.

First they invited the district superintendent, dressed as a Norseman from Greenland (where there are few trees) to teach the class about unlimited wants, basic needs, and scarcity. They took a "pretend trip" to Greenland, drew an outline of a Viking boat on the school parking lot, and imagined the supplies that would fit in the small space available.

The students examined the progress of one log, from the forest to its final use, to get an idea of the number of people who share in the economic gains from the forest. They produced and sold large numbers of 14 different paper products and craft goods, such as angels made of coffee filters and bags of reindeer hay. A parent on a trip to Peru took along 60 construction paper giraffes with stick gum necks made by the class, and other paper goods were presented to delegates from the city's sister city in China. Famous historic trees were also studied in a dramatic classroom play, and when their craft fair brought in a profit of over $200, they spent part of it at a Christmas tree farm and then bought a dogwood tree to plant on the school campus.

❑

"Up, Up, and Away With Economics"

Sonya D. Whaley and
Cynthia J. Horton
Baker Elementary School
Little Rock, Arkansas

The arrival of a brand-new first grader from Vietnam inspired teachers Sonya Whaley and Cynthia Horton to design an economics curriculum that would help the other students understand and appreciate the cultural diversity in the world. Twelve lessons introduced the basic concepts, while eight enrichment activities–including a field trip, music, and a home /school connection–gave the 23 students practical, real life experience with what they had learned.

Beginning in December, the class set off on an imaginary hot air balloon trip to visit six countries, arriving in China just in time to celebrate the Chinese New Year. They had

watched a video of the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta, composed a song using the "Up, Up, and Away" theme song of the Fifth Dimension singing group, and written about hot air balloons, making difficult decisions about what to take on the trip. Christmas had also given them insight into unlimited wants and scarcity of resources.

The Vietnamese classmate provided a service by teaching the art of eating a Chinese feast with chopsticks, and the entire class produced a dragon that they used for a New Year parade. St. Patrick's Day was celebrated in Ireland, where students became specialists in producing potato art greeting cards. Other countries visited were England (goods and services), Italy (money), and Mexico (producers and consumers). A final homecoming event in May brought families an opportunity to create their own model hot air balloons.

In summary, the teachers said: "This multicultural approach to teaching economics developed in our students an awareness that economics is a part of life, no matter where you may live in the world." It also provided an appreciation for the cultural heritages of other countries, an understanding that will benefit them and their community throughout their lives.

❑

"We mixed children, hot air balloons, multicultural celebrations, and fun!"

Part Two
Intermediate Level
Grades 4-6

Full texts of first place through fourth place award-winning projects are available through Interlibrary Loan. Borrow them free through your library. School, college/university, and public libraries provide this service.

The Milner Library at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois, houses the entire collection. (OCLC symbol IAI.) Projects may be requested only through Interlibrary Loan.

Call numbers for Intermediate Level exemplary projects 1995-1996 are:

First Place

Hurd, Karen A. HB74.8.N38i1996H87
Techie T's and Arizona Imports: A High-Tech Joint Business Venture

Second Place

Chastain, Daphne M., Bonnie Cherry, & Tina Smith HB74.8.N38i1996C45
Bringing Economics Home

1st Place - Intermediate

"Techie T's and Arizona Imports: A High-Tech Joint Business Venture"

Karen A. Hurd
Collegiate School
Richmond, Virginia

Convinced that computers and e-mail are the bridge linking partners in different places for collaboration in successful ventures, Karen Hurd, a fourth grade teacher in an eastern private school, used the Internet to find another "techie" teacher at a public school in the southwest and set up a joint business venture.

Since she believed that the geography, natural resources, and cultural make-up of a region usually determine what people decide to produce, Hurd planned the project so that her students would begin to realize how important interdependence and cooperation are to success.

The Arizona school had a largely Native American and Spanish student body, so an early step involved research comparing the population, climate, economy, and culture of both states. Each student was matched with a "keypal" in the other school and the pair wrote short autobiographies that they exchanged by e-mail. This process was so exciting that the first thing each day the class checked to see if any e-mail had arrived overnight.

"It takes a while to train nine- and ten-year-olds to use a multitude of computer programs, equipment, and telecommunications procedures when you are the only adult in the classroom," commented Hurd, so she and her partner teacher decided to go slowly as they taught the economics principles needed to set up a business. Both classes studied the steps to decision making and how to carry out research, then created graphs comparing economic data from the two states, such as agriculture, per capita income, unemployment

rates, immigration trends, and manufacturing.

Once they understood the requirements for organizing a business, classes brainstormed ideas for products they could make and sell. The 22 students in Virginia decided to create computer designs that could be transferred to t-shirts and then sold at the school fair. Since the Arizona class did not have funding to obtain raw materials, Hurd's class secured a financial grant for them, as well as applying for their own business loan. They then imported some of the Indian jewelry, cookbooks, and Navaho sand paintings produced in Arizona to include in the fair. A "Recipes of the Southwest" booklet, featuring pictures and comments from the Arizona students, was especially popular.

Before deciding how many shirts to produce, the class created a market survey among adults who normally attended the school fair, since they were the most likely customers. Then they organized the business into departments, applied for the jobs in which they were most interested, and held a company-wide meeting to make final decisions on the designs and sizes needed. An advertising campaign included posters, banners, jingles, and skits, reaching all of the other students in the school.

A spreadsheet program tracked the times parents as well as students would be available to work at the fair, selling both shirts and Arizona imports. When the fair was over, each department met to evaluate their work and report to the rest of the class. The company

"It was easy to understand all the economics because <u>we did it</u> in our business!"

Highlights of Economics Content

This year-long project was a joint education/business venture that electronically linked fourth-graders in two places, using e-mail and digital technology in an integrated program of economics, social studies, and language arts.

Students compared and contrasted their cities in terms of population, immigration trends, and natural resources, exploring the links between geography and economic activities. The role of technology in improving communication and the importance of communication skills in providing a competitive edge in today's business world was emphasized.

Decision making, market surveys, creating graphs, understanding supply and demand, and record keeping were included in the economics instruction as student businesses produced and sold t-shirts, Indian art jewelry, sand paintings, and regional cookbooks.

Free markets, competition, and technology helped students become productive citizens to help prepare for the economic challenges they will encounter in their adult lives.

Links to National Economics Standards 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15

James Dick

"Keypals are like penpals, only keypals e-mail each other."

president then prepared a written report with details of the success of the project. A profit statement, inventory of remaining products, and decision of how to spend the $200 profit completed the business. Thank you notes were written to everyone who helped the company in any way. Out of the 108 t-shirts made for the fair, only 19 were left.

As a final assignment, each student wrote and illustrated a report summarizing this business experience, using a maximum of economics vocabulary terms to fully explain the paper.

Parents expressed great satisfaction with what their children learned during the year. "The most wonderful component of this project was the enthusiasm that the class had for the subject of economics," said one. "This truly was a lesson that should follow them throughout their entire lives." Another was pleased with how comfortable the class became with technology and the tools of the 21st century.

The teacher stressed how much the students seemed to gain from the experience. Along with a dramatic rise in economic knowledge test scores, they became familiar with another area of the country and discovered that in spite of their diversity, they and their keypals were more alike than different. "They also learned how telecommunications is a necessity when you must be in constant communication with a business partner 2,000 miles away and you can't afford to pick up the phone every day."

How did the students feel about their business? Hurd put together a "Kid Quotes" page based on their written comments. One who worked with the finance department said that when they got the loan for the business, "I was thrilled and excited. $525 is a lot of money for a school bank to loan out. I am amazed that they approved it." Another said: "I enjoyed doing the business with my class because it was like a business in the real world." A third said he had learned "very much about economics that I can use when I am in a small business selling things around the block."

"I like selling the products and dealing with money. I like seeing people walk away with smiles on their faces."

As for Hurd, she summed up the year with this remark: "Would I do this again? You bet!!"

PLAN *For the Future*

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2nd Place - Intermediate

"Bringing Economics Home"

Daphne M. Chastain, Bonnie Cherry, and Tina Smith
Harvey Jones Elementary School
Springdale, Arkansas

Intermediate grade at-risk students explored the housing market in their community to learn basic economic concepts. A simulated house-buying project taught students about markets, price, and the role of financial institutions. Students became entrepreneurs as they created and marketed Mother's Day pins, with "profits" donated to Habitat for Humanity.

Students also developed a plan for renovating a house, visited home building centers and had classroom presentations by a real estate agent, a bank loan officer, and the president of Habitat for Humanity, who provided insights into the housing market and helped students become more knowledgeable decision makers.

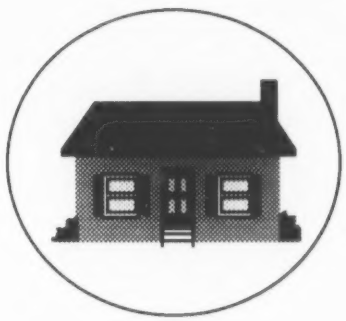
Links to National Economics Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 14

James Dick

Fifty fourth- and fifth-grade students from a low socioeconomic area, some enrolled in an at-risk program, had little previous experience with the housing market. Most lived in rented apartments and houses or in federal projects; many suffered from low self-esteem and poor grades. They moved often, receiving little encouragement from their families to achieve in school.

A team of teachers decided to plant the idea of home ownership in these students so they could begin to set goals. "We wanted them to be more knowledgeable consumers, so that upon reaching adulthood, they could own their own homes."

Believing that the most effective way to teach lessons is to provide direct experience for their students, the teachers asked a realtor to locate an affordable house for sale in the area of the school that they could use as a model. The classes researched different countries to



compare the role that resources play in people's decisions about satisfying their housing needs and wants. They studied floor plans and house plan books and read newspaper ads to learn what the abbreviations meant.

When they visited "their" house, they simulated buying and renovating it by dividing into several cooperative learning groups, with each assigned to a room or to the outdoor property. Students took measurements for floors, walls, and windows and discussed the improvements that should be made before it could become their ideal home.

"Students caught economic fever and became enthusiastic in the pursuit of economic knowledge."

Next they visited two building supply businesses to determine how they might spend the money allocated for renovations. They learned about competition between the two firms, and how supply and demand affects price.

The real estate agent told them about his role in helping families find the housing they could afford, a mortgage company loan officer explained different types of loans and repayment procedures, and an economics professor used baseball cards to teach them about markets and prices.

The students contracted with a woodworker to make small wooden houses that they painted, made into pins, and sold. After the president of the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity visited to tell them about the service his agency provided, the classes presented him with the profits from their product sales.

"The students began to understand that the concepts they learned were transferable to the real world," said the teachers. "They began to see that owning a home could be in their future."

Honorable Mention - Intermediate

Entrepreneurship, basic economic concepts, decision making, and creation of classroom businesses were among the characteristics shared by the intermediate honorable mention awards. In one project, sixth-graders examined third-party costs and benefits of the local poultry industry. A fifth-grade class studied the Amazon Rain Forest, learning about interdependence and international trade, while fourth-grade students in another unit produced and marketed notepacks.

The teachers in these classrooms used three different approaches for teaching economics to intermediate students: children's literature, an integrated multicultural study of another country, and developing a business.

Links to National Economics Standards 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, 18

James Dick

"COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO: Waking up to Economics"

Alethea Ann Channell
Sheridan Intermediate School
Sheridan, Arkansas

"How do you get a chicken to stop squawking and settle down? You grab it by the feet and turn it upside down. How do you get 46 sixth graders to settle down and learn? You teach **Economics**!"

Teacher Ann Channell used Susan Sharpe's book Chicken Bucks to teach her students economic concepts. Dividing the ten chapters into 14 lessons, she introduced the functions and characteristics of money, scarcity, division of labor, resources, and other fundamental economic principles. Over the course of nine weeks, students applied their learning to the agricultural industry, a major source of employment in the rural county surrounding their community. A poultry grower visited to educate them about entrepreneurship, and they took a field trip to a fast food restaurant to consume the end product. A ride on a riverboat helped them understand how human, natural, and capital resources work together.

Each student produced a design for a "Chicken Buck," then voted on which one they should use as classroom currency. The Bucks they earned for good work, good behavior, and services rendered to the class were then spent at the Feed Store for such items as passes for extra recess, computer time, movies, or baseball cards. They studied advertising under the guidance of an expert from the community, and sold enough products from their classroom business to sponsor an ice cream party.

Channell was pleased with what they learned. "When they realized that economics was a part of their everyday lives, they began finding examples in comic books, television shows, and situations that arose in the classroom and at home." They ended the year by winning several awards in the state Economics Fair and participating in an economic scavenger hunt.

❑

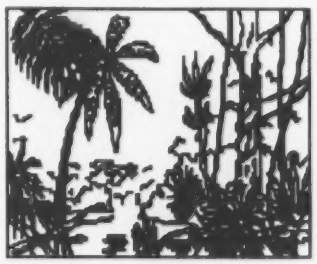
"It's Raining Economics in the Amazon"

Louise Simington Crump
Weiner Elementary School
Weiner, Arkansas

The scarcity of Brazil nuts in the classroom brought to life the need for wise decision making in allocating valuable, scarce resources, as Louise Crump's fifth grade began a multicultural study of Brazil and the Amazon Rain Forest.

The school has an annual spring International Day, with each class choosing a country to study in depth. Beginning with a look at South America, the students were fascinated by a comparison of the economy, customs and traditions of Brazil and the Rain Forest to

"I had never thought of Brazil as an important country before I learned about its natural resources."



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the United States. They were excited about the idea of learning some Portuguese words, the national pastime of soccer, the samba and the bossa nova, the significance of Carnival, Christmas rituals, imported and exported products, and the interdependence of plants and animals.

Teaching economics across the curriculum meant writing letters to a Brazilian minister asking for information about goods and services, calculating market surveys, making a rain forest in a bottle, practicing numbers and greetings in Portuguese, and playing economic games. Students looked for rain forest products in their homes, like coffee, chocolate, and rubber. They produced Rain Forest Mix and Tropical Fruit Punch for an Amazon Rain Forest Consumption Party and composed a "Rain Forest Rhapsody." A classroom visitor who lived in Brazil for several years helped them pronounce a number of difficult words.

Crump is sold on economic education. "Seeing the fun my students have while absorbing valuable information keeps me teaching economics year after year," she said.

❑

"I feel the unit was very beneficial to me because I learned a lot, and it made me feel like an adult at his/her own business."

"Notepad Economics"
Lisa Corbin Fritz
St. Matthew School
Indianapolis, Indiana

When the fourth-grade class of Lisa Fritz decided to begin a classroom business, they saw a need they could fill: a notepad on which the parents of students in their school could write notes to their children's teachers, instead of using odds and ends of paper.

Engaging a printer to make 500 pads and taking a market survey in order to set a fair price were two activities the young entrepreneurs undertook. The business was run solely by the students, with the teacher offering support and suggestions. Fritz used a number of children's books to reinforce the economic concepts needed for the project's success. She also encouraged students to interview business owners and to discuss the types of companies their parents worked for. At the end of the project, the class voted to use part of their profits to benefit others.

"I believe that students will be better equipped for life in the 21st century," said Fritz, "and I hope that our students will be the international leaders of our world."

❑

"I like being in finance (in our class business) because I like to keep track of things like money."

Part Three
Middle/Junior High School Level
Grades 7-9

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Call numbers for Middle/Junior High School Level exemplary projects 1995-1996 are:

First Place

Butler, Judy, & Cindy Harwell — HB74.8.N38j1996B88
BOSNIA: The Price of Peace is Economic Development

Second Place

Wilson, Roy Lynn — HB74.8.N38j1996W55
Continental Choices: An Econography of Trade, 1492-1750

Third Place

Fowler, Karen Wilson — HB74.8.N38j1996F69
Blooming Economics

Fourth Place

Sweet, Teresa D. — HB74.8.N38j1996S94
The Breakfast Club

1st Place - Middle/Junior High School

"Bosnia: The Price of Peace is Economic Development"

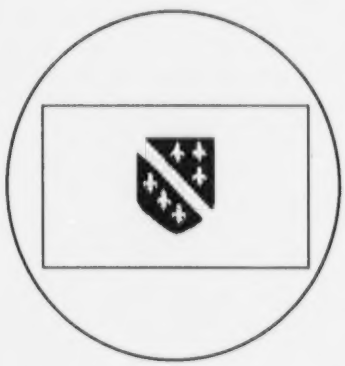
Judy Butler and Cindy Harwell
Lakeland Highlands Middle School
Lakeland, Florida

Computer simulations and television news current events proved to be an irresistible combination in promoting learning among eighth-grade history students in this project. Guidance counselor Judy Butler and art instructor Cindy Harwell teamed with a history teacher to help their 165 students understand the relevance of economics to a real-world setting, leading to the realization that lasting peace can be built through economic development in a formerly troubled area.

Examining how a current civil war impacts American foreign policy and connecting history to the social and economic themes of the present, four main themes explored Bosnia as an issue of world peace and world trade, a case for capitalism, and a redevelopment issue.

The classroom became a laboratory for experimentation in developing critical thinking, decision making, communication skills, workplace know how, and economizing behaviors. The business community and parents took part in the learning process as well, as they modeled participatory citizenship. Prior to this unit, the students had studied American history as a record of human choice in dealing with available resources. They had also explored the principles and practices of the nation's early leaders, some of whom, like Jefferson and Hamilton, they saw profiled on a cable television biography series. Other preliminary lessons included the role of free trade vs. protectionism and independent individualism vs. welfare.

Bosnia was chosen as the modern illustration for these concepts because newscasts



featuring its conflict appeared every day, resulting in abundant materials to investigate, easily at hand. Students were puzzled by these issues and events, said the teachers, and it was apparent that when they talked with their parents about increasing U.S. involvement in the process, the adults were puzzled, too.

A week-long lesson provided background in the conflicts and wars that have dotted the time line of history, resulting in varying opportunity costs and trade-offs. The classes discussed conflict resolution, stressing the fact that fights do not resolve issues, but wise decision makers identify and explore which alternative will provide the greatest benefit at the least cost. Most students felt that peace could be seen as a less costly choice than war. After reading about how Alfred Nobel, the Swedish inventor of dynamite, established the Nobel Peace Prize because of his guilt in causing mass destruction, the classes designated several present-day American government leaders for their own Peacemaker Awards.

In cooperative groups, students investigated Bosnia's geography, history, religious foundations, political system, and its economy while under Soviet rule. The school media center served as the basis for research and aided them in becoming computer literate, accessing and using information systems, managing files, experiencing teamwork, and taking individual responsibility.

Following reports on their research, the classes turned to the topic of trade, identifying the needs of people, the availability of resources, competition, and transportation. They set up a "Financial Library" that included newspaper business sections and articles on international world trade, where they browsed freely.

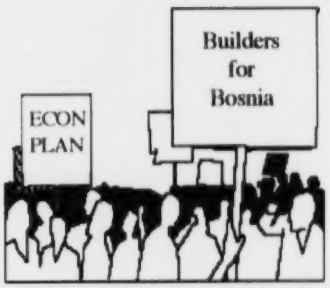
Highlights of Economics Content

This award-winning project was a thematic interdisciplinary unit based on the continuing crisis in the Balkans. The transition from a command to a market economy and the ethnic and national rivalries in that area provided a setting for studying scarcity, choice, marginal analysis, specialization, comparative advantage, and economic decision making.

Trade, economic development, and economic freedom were integrated into the unit through simulations and case studies. Solving economic mysteries, a teaching strategy first outlined in Eyes on the Economy, was also a part of this unit. Viewing "Cable in the Classroom" and Channel One news coverage of Bosnia as well as computer resources connected history and current events to contemporary social and economic themes as students explored ways for resolving the Bosnian crisis.

Links to Economic Education Standards
1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15

James Dick



In the third lesson, seeing Bosnia as a case for building capitalism, students watched cable TV news programs to study entrepreneurship, the profit motive, supply and demand, investments, and the role of governments in differing economic systems. Members of the regional development council visited them to discuss how their organization worked to bring businesses to the region in order to build local industries.

In order to study redevelopment, students spent three weeks with a computer simulation of a model city that turned out, the teachers said, to be "an exciting discovery and a wonderful adventure." Originally planned as an illustration of interdependence in the global economy with trade as the catalyst for peace, the program changed when the students began to consider trade as a by-product of urban renewal. From this they determined that Bosnia's best hope for a lasting peace lies in economic development.

As they studied the roles that individuals must play in redeveloping Bosnia, students came to see how they themselves would impact the U.S. economy, and how, in turn, the American economy would impact their own futures. In applying the lessons they had learned, the classes were assigned roles as "Ministers of Economic Development" for Bosnia and asked to plan the market economy in a country that has little remaining infrastructure, unfavorable weather conditions, and outdated technology and equipment.

Building New Bosnia and undertaking city planning required looking at population changes, levels of health, education, and tax rates. For some students, it was their first opportunity to experience how difficult it is to construct and stick to a budget. Working on a five-year plan for redevelopment taught them the frustrations of trying to meet too many needs with too few resources–and gave them a more sympathetic understanding of government.

The culmination of the project came at the Polk Economic Expo, where students laid out the city they had planned and amazed the judges with the model for joint ventures they had created in New Bosnia. Along with the housing zones, utilities, and recreation areas needed in a metropolis, they built models for fast food franchises and other businesses that would give investors enough incentive to participate in the plan.

"The project made the students realize that Bosnians are people, just like us–they dream, work, and play."

"The students will never forget this project," concluded the teachers. "They were able to develop empathy, workplace skills, and a keener awareness of the world and how they can change it, and they are better equipped as analytical decision makers."

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2nd Place - Middle/Junior High

"Continental Choices: An Econography of Trade, 1492-1750"

Roy Lynn Wilson
Sheridan Junior High School
Sheridan, Arkansas

Why is French still spoken in Quebec and Spanish in Mexico, while citizens of the United States typically speak English?

Answering that question requires an understanding of the economic factors present when North America was settled, along with knowledge of the geographical features of the territories. This combination of economics and geography was labeled "econography" by history teacher Roy Lynn Wilson as he developed a game to teach eighth-grade students to think creatively about the settlement of the New World.

The Spanish, French, and English colonization of North America provided an opportunity to emphasize economics and geography in this unit for eighth-grade American history. Twenty-one economic concepts were taught through the use of direct instruction, brainstorming, written and oral reports, mapmaking, and a teacher-developed game he named "Continental Choices."

Concept review cards were also used, requiring students to think in new ways about the relationships between economics, history, and geography.

Links to National Economics Standards 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14

James Dick

"Survival of our ancestors involved the terms scarcity, needs, wants, choices, resources, supply, and barter," Wilson said. Bitter rivalries between the European powers caused a struggle for control of the land and its resources, determining the success or failure, as well as the future choices, of developing nations.

Students first learned the economic terms and studied

maps showing British settlements on the East Coast, the French strongholds along the St. Lawrence River and in the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys, and Spanish locations in Florida and the Southwest. They looked at three different scenes showing life in the colonies and how it differed from one settlement to another, then brainstormed about the types of economic activities they observed.

Economic fact cards explained terms as they described pioneer life. For example, scarcity, the lack of sufficient resources to produce all the goods and services that people desire, was illustrated by the lack of water in the Southwest, and the competition card showed two settlers trying to buy the same item needed on the frontier.

"This game showed that competition occurs on a much grander scale than just favorite sports teams, clothing styles, or neighborhoods."

A guest speaker told the class about cultural aspects of Hispanic Society; they listened to French language tapes and made maps; and the teacher showed slides of Colonial Williamsburg. Finally, near the end of the two-week unit, they played the game, using the econographic knowledge they had attained. Game pieces were French Fur Pelts, British Shillings, and Spanish Doubloons; property was won by answering economics questions correctly, with bartering between players also encouraged.

"The key to advancing in society is increasingly tied to how well students are able to make wise economic decisions," said Wilson. Their participation in "Continental Choices" helped them better understand what makes society work.

3rd Place - Middle/Junior High

"Blooming Economics: The Roots of Entrepreneurship"

Karen Wilson Fowler
Kammerer Middle School
Louisville, Kentucky

When Karen Fowler planned the year for her seventh-grade Academic Enrichment class, she knew she wanted to teach a unit that incorporated basic economic concepts with service learning, but she did not know what the focus of the lessons would be. Then one day, students mentioned that their side of the building had been left out when the school grounds were landscaped, and they wondered if they could do anything to beautify that walkway. That was all the motivation they needed to undertake an economics project.

Fowler turned to the local area business association to help her students understand what skills are needed in the workplace today, and what is involved in being an entrepreneur. After they studied risk-taking and read biographies of entrepreneurs from the past and present, the decision to follow those examples and to set up a classroom business came easily.

"The firemen who donated the use of their firehouse for the car wash had as much fun as the kids!"

Next students examined several economic decisions made in history and found examples in current events by studying newspaper accounts. Markets of the past, such as the Greek agoras and medieval fairs and seaports, were compared with modern shopping malls, want ads, and home shopping by TV or computer. They also looked at businesses in their own community to explore where their families purchased goods and services, and why they chose particular ones.

Then came the time to make decisions. What should they produce, what were their productive resources, how could they finance their efforts? Some students had past experience with school businesses, and they were wary of trying to sell a product. Instead, the choice was to offer a service. They elected a President, who chose managers for marketing and finance on the basis of job application forms. When the nearby Fire Department offered the use of their facilities to host a car wash, a date was chosen and advertising began.

Students found sponsors, and some families donated refreshments and supplies, so the actual costs of the business were minor. On the big day, students took turns in committees that washed, dried, and vacuumed the 25 vehicles that came. With no loans to repay or stockholders to compensate, the profits and donations totaling $250 purchased many plants provided at cost by an area nursery. The class "loved being able to see the 'fruits of their labors' each day as they came into school," Fowler said. An enjoyable lesson had served everyone.

This unit combined service learning, social studies, and science to teach students about entrepreneurship and to engage them in a school beautification project. These 7th-graders used a decision-making process and an understanding of resources, markets, the factors of production, opportunity costs, and trade-offs to create Polar Wash, Inc., a car wash and refreshment stand.

The role of entrepreneurs was explored, using a business plan with advertising and sales records to determine profit/loss. Their earnings bought plants to beautify the school grounds.

Links to National Economics Standards 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14

James Dick

4th Place - Middle/Junior High

"The Breakfast Club"

Teresa D. Sweet
South Seminole Middle School
Casselberry, Florida

Math teacher Teresa Sweet thought her students should understand the relevance of mathematics to the real world. Her students, though, were not motivated to learn. By combining the challenge of establishing and running their own business with a solid foundation of economics principles, she enabled her eighth-graders to gain self-confidence and feel better prepared for the real careers in their future.

Over the course of the year, students learned the concepts and procedures necessary to run a food concession. They began planning six weeks in advance by finding a suitable outdoor location on the school grounds, ensuring they would have adequate furniture and utilities, establishing contacts for a start-up loan, contacting vendors, and obtaining permission from the administration. A month before the cafe opened they conducted a consumer survey, developed a logo and an advertising strategy, interviewed for positions and learned the job skills needed to do their work. They also studied banking and learned the importance of social and business skills in a restaurant.

As the big occasion drew near, the Breakfast Club personnel practiced by serving only faculty and staff members for a week. They then sent invitations to parents, school officials, community leaders, and the local press to attend the Grand Opening. For the next nine weeks, an extensive menu of cereal, fruit, donuts, muffins, waffles with syrup, bagels, milk, and other beverages was prepared every day. One person picked up the fresh baked goods from the vendor each morning, others set the tables with fresh linens, and still others cooked, served customers, ran the cash register, or cleaned the area and restocked for the next day.

A delivery service within the school was set up, and as time went by the class offered gift certificates and weekly billing for regular customers. They advertised each added service, using their logo of a coffee cup for recognition.

Students gained many practical skills through the cafe, from learning how to write checks and make change to maintaining accounts receivable and payable records and inventory controls. Not only did they study profits, they achieved them: $600 that they used to purchase calculators, along with field trips to a bank and a local restaurant.

"Owning their own business was a challenge they accepted and worked hard at," said Sweet. "Teaching economics made math relevant, and the Breakfast Club gave them something of which they can be proud. It has already made a difference in their lives."

"Economic education gives our children and our nation a better chance for success."

The Breakfast Club was a year-long interdisciplinary program that incorporated mathematics, free enterprise and consumer education, and living skills into real life experiences for students.

Eighth-grade students developed a business plan and secured the resources to operate a before-school cafe and offer for sale to teachers and students breakfast and snack items. In addition to operating a small business, the students learned about banking, marketing, personal income and budgeting, savings and investments, credit and interest rates, and insurance and taxes.

Links to National Economics Standards 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16

James Dick

Honorable Mention - Middle/Junior High School

Ancient history, drug education, and recent American history were selected by middle school/junior high teachers as areas where economics could be integrated into the curriculum. An interest in archeological research, the consequences of drug use decisions, and intergenerational economics through oral history provided the motivation for learning.

These honorable mention units demonstrated that creative teachers can find ways to emphasize economics in different subject areas, and that economic concepts are useful to students in understanding both historical periods and current events.

Links to National Economics Standards 1, 4

James Dick

"Arbeia: Roman Fort and Economic Archive"
Carole M. Sandy
Collegiate School
Richmond, Virginia

Five classes in eighth-grade history responded enthusiastically when their teacher inserted into the curriculum a unit on the economics of an ancient civilization, based on her own personal experience in archaeological research. Carole Sandy divided her students into small committees of four or five and asked them to explore major topics and reach a consensus on questions regarding effects of the Roman conquest of northern Britain in the first century AD.

Arbeia, the fort and supply base location where Hadrian's Wall was to be built, was the scene of great change when the rural tribal societies were forced by their conquerors to adopt a way of life that depended much more on international trade and advanced technology. Roads and bridges were built and great buildings with classical architectrual design replaced many of the simple round houses of the Britons. Agriculture and crafts took on new forms as the inhabitants entered a market economy.

Students watched slides on British industry both before and after Roman occupation, then prepared reports and displays to share what their committees had learned. The film "Hadrian's Wall" reinforced what they had investigated.

Having researched on-site at the fort and at British museums, Sandy was able to pass on to her classes details of the occupation, comparing them with similar situations in other countries and time periods, such as the impact of Europeans on American Indian tribes and the military occupation of Japan. She felt the economics content enhanced learning for her students.

"This was a change of pace from routine instruction, and students responded enthusiastically."

"They make economic decisions every day of their lives," said Sandy. "They might as well be able to realize the forces at work which result in a 'for better/for worse' economic environment." ❑

"D.O.P.E.: Destroying Our Precious Economy
Catherine L. Young and Opal A. Robinson
Darby Junior High School
Fort Smith, Arkansas

In a five-week study of the economic impact of drugs on the local, state, and federal governments, health teacher Catherine Young and English teacher Opal Robinson wanted to help their eighth-graders prepare for living in the 21st century.

The 94 students in three classes came from a variety of backgrounds, but since their school was located in the inner city, drug trafficking and gang-related activities were familiar to everyone. "We felt that if they could see the economic impact of drug use on our community before they chose to become involved, it might save a lot of heartache in the future."

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Following a textbook that was supplemented with additional facts and statistics, the classes learned that making wise choices about tobacco, alcohol, and drugs could be the deciding factor in whether or not they would lead productive lives. Their wide-ranging discussions also built a bridge of trust and security between teachers and students so that ideas about drugs, friends, family, and the future could be openly shared.

Basic economic concepts applied to the topic included incentives, profits, opportunity costs, consumption, competition, and entrepreneurial risk taking. Students discovered that the risks of damaging personal health, their families' well-being, lost opportunities, or having an unfulfilled life were staggering. Tracing the cost per year of smoking one pack of cigarettes daily and the costs to the larger government and societal units was an eye-opening exercise. They compared lifestyles with and without drugs, and produced a skit about their decisions.

The teachers have a personal goal for the future: to check school records in a few years and see if there is a decrease in the number of suspensions and drop-out rates due to alco-hol and other drug use. "The increase of knowledge and the changing of some attitudes made this a worthwhile study," they said.

❑

"Intergenerational Student/Senior Conversations"

Ben L. Saxon

Fort King Middle School

Ocala, Florida

"Concentration camps, Hitler, and the depression. Do you know much about them? Neither did I until I met a nice lady named Judy."

That's how one eighth-grade student summed up her participation in a special project that Ben Saxon incorporated in his 20th century American history class. Students selected topics of interest to them, such as the holocaust, President Kennedy, Pearl Harbor, the big band era, and so on, did basic research on the issues, and then interviewed people from an adult community who had lived through and been part of that history. A videotape summarized the Conversations, and a booklet of students' reports on the project was compiled and sold.

"I'm very glad I did this project. I have learned a lot about how things went before I was born."

In most cases, four students and two adults talked about the topic they had chosen. The class had previously studied economic concepts and were told to be on the lookout for them during the conversations. "The unanimous opinion of students, seniors, teachers, and school administrators was that this project was a most worthwhile event which was enjoyed by and benefited all participants," said Saxon.

❑

"Economics is not an 'ivory tower' subject. We must all be made aware that we live in an economic world."

Part Four
Senior High School Level
Grades 10-12

Full texts of first place through fourth place award-winning projects are available through Interlibrary Loan. Borrow them free through your library. School, college/university, and public libraries provide this service.

The Milner Library at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois, houses the entire collection. (OCLC symbol IAI.) Projects may be requested only through Interlibrary Loan.

Call numbers for Senior High School Level exemplary projects 1995-1996 are:

First Place

Lemons, Kathy — HB74.8.N38s1996L46
Walk in My Economy

Second Place

Scheuerer, Diane, & Jackie Balcerak — HB74.8.N38s1996S34
Stepping Into the Future: Daycare on Campus

Third Place

Glaser, Jennifer Backer — HB74.8.N38s1996G53
Sellers in the 'Burg: Economics Through the Eyes of Entrepreneurs

Fourth Place

Mosley, Jeannette — HB74.8.N38s1996M67
The Road Map to $ucce$$ = A Business Plan

1st Place - Senior High School

"Walk in My Economy"

Kathy Lemons
Fayetteville High School
Fayetteville, Arkansas

When the local community experienced a great influx of Hispanic immigrants and her students did not seem to understand the reasons for this immigration, Spanish teacher Kathy Lemons developed an economics curriculum for her 152 beginning language students and the 90 students in an interdisciplinary class to help them realize the economic causes involved.

"I saw a real need for my students to understand why the cultural makeup of Northwest Arkansas was rapidly changing and to understand instead of fear the immigrants," she said. "I also felt they needed to see the plus sides of this immigration for local corporations."

In the space of two years the local Hispanic population had risen from about 2,000 to over 15,000 people. The first economic reason for this growth was the devaluation of the peso, with its resulting devastation of the Mexican economy. Secondly, this part of the state had very low unemployment rates. As one of the largest chicken producing areas in the United States, many of the available jobs were undesirable to local workers, so the businesses recruited and welcomed immigrant employees.

Rather than simply talking about how this type of rapid cultural change causes many problems in a community, the class had the opportunity in this project to live through a currency devaluation and so come to understand the devastating effects this event has on the people who experience it. First, they learned how to figure dollar equivalents based on different exchange rates. They also learned that the distribution of wealth was much

different in Mexico than in the U.S. In order to simulate life in that country, they drew lots to take on a new station in life, discovering that a much larger number of students became members of the lower economic class than was true in their own community. Only a few students now carried the label of middle class, and just one lucky student was considered wealthy. These economic levels mirrored those of the general Mexican population.

Students were then given an amount of American dollars in accordance with their class and had to figure the equivalent in Nuevo Pesos. They were challenged by this exercise, said the teacher, because they found that this currency was considered "weak" compared to the much stronger US dollar, and they had to make sure they had received the correct amount of bills and coins from the Casa de Cambios (the Exchange House).

They had already researched and debated many of the pro's and con's about NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and had studied Mexico's economic problems during the 1990s and the efforts of the U.S. government to provide assistance. They also had learned about some of the costs and benefits of immigration as well as labor force supply and demand.

The next step was to make a budget for their money, paying for three days of transportation and shelter. Food was optional. On day one, each paid the posted prices for his

"For the first time, many began to view economics as a global issue, instead of the typical teenage attitude of 'What's in it for me?'"

Highlights of Economics Content

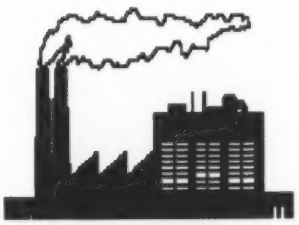
Beginning Spanish students and others in an interdisciplinary class studied the economic causes of immigration from Mexico to Arkansas in this five-lesson unit. The students determined the costs and benefits of immigration for the newcomers and the positive effects of immigration on their community. The impact of the devaluation of the Mexican peso and the low employment rate in Arkansas were viewed as examples of the incentives causing people to migrate.

Through simulations, the classes learned how to calculate exchange rates and how the distribution of wealth differs between Mexico and the United States. Other lessons included the pros and cons of the North American Free Trade Act and the role of the International Monetary Fund.

In addition to developing an understanding of the economics of immigration, the unit had educational outcomes for understanding the Spanish language and Hispanic culture.

Links to National Economics Standards
1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 13, 19

James Dick



or her economic class, buying food only if their money and budgets permitted. Lemons provided large candy bars for the upper class to represent a whole chicken, medium-sized candy for the middle class, indicating the purchase of some chicken parts, and some small pieces of candy for the lower class, representing a chicken foot with which they might make some soup. (She also planned the exercise so that the lower class did not have enough money to buy food on each day.)

On the second day, before the bills were paid, the currency was devalued. While the upper class always had enough money to supply all of their needs, the middle class found that now after paying for transportation and shelter, there was not enough left for food. The lower class could not even pay their bills, let alone eat. The class then discussed the problem of having one's economic situation changed overnight, with no way to remedy it.

On the final day of the simulation, students were again asked to pay their bills, but most could not. Then they were offered the chance to be able to eat if they were willing to go to the U.S in order to find employment. They were told some would have to enter illegally, and that all would be in a different culture, surrounded by people speaking a strange language. It was no surprise to Lemons that 99% of the students–even those who had earlier been most outspoken against immigration–chose to leave.

She was interested in the reactions the students had to the simulation. "At times it felt like there was going to be a riot, especially when they figured out what the devaluation was doing to their ability to buy candy." The rich person always guarded his money carefully, she said, while the lower classes were hostile about their "plight in life" and tried to find ways to get out of the situation by stealing, asking to change the rules of the game, or trying to make "counterfeit" money.

The greatest gain was in the change in attitude towards the local immigrants. Many students moved from viewing them as job-stealing foreigners to real people with families to feed who had come to the area because of plentiful economic opportunity.

"When I made the budget I felt kind of bad, because there are people really living like this–or worse."

They also began to view Mexico as a partner in economic growth rather than as an undesirable country good for nothing but vacationing. They saw that economics is a global issue; the U.S. is affected by what happens in other countries, and cannot be an economic island.

With the success of the project supported by test scores, it has now become a permanent unit of the Spanish curriculum for the entire school system.

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2nd Place - Senior High

"Stepping Into the Future: Day Care on Campus"

Diane Scheuerer and Jackie Balcerak
Eau Gallie High School
Melbourne, Florida

Imagine a course of study for high school students that could raise attendance, lower the drop-out rate, save a great deal of a school district's tax funds, provide an employment opportunity for students to learn skills for becoming self-sufficient, and help young people become good parents.

That is exactly what happened when Diane Scheuerer and Jackie Balcerak, teachers in the Child Care Assisting and Teen Parents programs of their school, decided to join forces to give their students a unit in economic education.

Previously, students learning to become certified child care workers were involved in a preschool for children aged three to five years, while the school district paid for private day care for the children of teen parents during their classes.

In this project, students set up a business and operated an on-campus day care center for their own young children. As they earned diplomas, they worked in the center in exchange for free day care. "Instead of a 'hand out,'" the teachers said, "these students participated in the care of all the children"–and their labor saved the taxpayers more than $45,000 for the school year.

All students in the two programs studied entrepreneurship, business organization, and concepts needed to plan and open the business. They completed a market survey and visited other child care facilities to observe proper procedures and investigate what equipment was needed for a successful center.

"Hard work is needed for economic success"

After preparing a brochure on their plans, they advertised a "wish list" of supplies and toys and gained support from members of the community, including civic associations and churches. The Eau Gallie National Honor Society donated developmentally appropriate toys, and the County Public Health Department provided immuniztions, well baby check-ups, and helped with the records required for the day care license.

Professional staff members had overall responsibility for teaching and supervising the students. Daily attendance among teen parents improved from 40-50% to 75-78%, partly because, as one mother said, "I can spend time with my child during lunch." The parents learned about good nutrition, while the 32 children cared for provided excellent experience for students planning careers in child care. "Stepping Into the Future" was a winning situation for everyone.

Establishing a day care center for infants to five-year-olds provided the framework for learning about caregiving and economics in a "hands-on," real world experience. This school business creation unit was developed to empower low-income, low self-esteem teen parents through vocational training that could eventually lead to certification for day care employment.

The students, as employees in the center, explored the role of entrepreneurs in a market economy, learned about different types of business organizations, developed a business plan, and studied the regulatory functions of government. The goal was to help students become productive workers in a market economy rather than income transfer recipients.

Links to National Economics Standards 2, 3, 5, 10, 13

James Dick

3rd Place - Senior High

"Sellers in the 'Burg: Economics Through the Eyes of Entrepreneurs"

Jennifer Backer Glaser
Silver Creek High School
Sellersburg, Indiana

"People who live in Sellersburg, Indiana, affectionately refer to their town as the 'burg," said business education teacher Jennifer Glaser in explaining how her economics project got its name. Previously she had discovered that her accounting students had little or no understanding of basic economics, and they had no idea that their city boasted a large number of entrepreneurs.

With the support of parents, school administrators, and members of the community, the curriculum she designed "brought alive a great opportunity for students to learn economics"–and they found out some fascinating information about their home town.

The centerpiece of the plan was a series of interviews with local business owners, some of whom came to the classroom for a "Panel of Entrepreneurs," and others who were visited in their establishments. To make the initial contacts, they wrote to the Chamber of Commerce and Town Board, then were invited to the Board meeting, where information about the class and its efforts was placed in the minutes of the meeting.

"I Really Really enjoyed this year–What a great way to learn!"

One person in attendance was the Police Chief, who suggested that the students visit the station to get business contact information. They also took part in an area television campaign on goal-setting, then became subjects of a TV news story featuring their project. Several newspapers gave them front page publicity as well.

When the students interviewed the entrepreneurs, they took along cameras and film donated by local drug stores. These photos, with business cards and logos, became part of a 90" x 120" town map quilt they made that was later displayed at the annual city-wide summer festival. Others in the school assisted them: the art department provided supplies, home economics students sewed material for the quilt (donated by a local merchant), and several instructors helped them identify the best panel members for the final program.

Most students were amazed to discover that their town of fewer than 5,000 residents boasted 100 entrepreneurs! An auto dealer, the founder of a family farm, a photographer, and the owner of a non-traditional bakery formed the panel that talked about the commitment and hard work needed to start and manage one's own business. "Commitment," said one student. "So many entrepreneurs said this in their lessons on the world of business that it caught my attention." Others responded that the project had opened their eyes and greatly encouraged them to explore more options for their own futures.

A group of high school students received widespread media coverage when they studied entrepreneurship in their community. Students used community involvement, field trips, and guest speakers as strategies for learning economics.

Art, home economics, English, drama, and foreign language teachers and school counselors advised the students during their exploration of the community, and assisted them in producing a quilted map of local entrepreneurs that was displayed at a town festival.

Links to National economics Standards 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15

James Dick

4th Place - Senior High

"The Road Map to $ucce$$ = A Business Plan"

Jeannette Mosley
Lake Gibson High School
Lakeland, Florida

High school special education teachers are especially concerned with preparing their students for the work world, Jeannette Mosley says, since many do not receive other formal education after graduation. They must know how to apply for jobs, to understand their responsibilities as employees, and to realize their place in the work world as it relates to the economy.

With one class in Business English and another in Life Management, she began the year with a standard textbook, but found everyone–including herself–bored with just reading and answering questions from the text. Brainstorming about the free enterprise system and natural resources first led to making ornaments from recycled materials and later to development of a cookbook.

A business consultant spoke to the students, helping them formulate a business plan that included financing and marketing. To obtain needed funding, they invited bank officers to explain loans, checking, and savings accounts; the bank then agreed to lend Traditional Paper Makers and Crafts Inc. $200 on a 90-day note to begin the project.

The 500 ornaments, including angels, wreaths, and trees, required assembly line skills. Other tasks the company performed were in connection with an advertising campaign, as they made posters and announcements and even filmed a commercial for the product.

"My desire was that they recognize the same kind of plan written for a business could be written for their lives."

After paying off the loan two months early and voting themselves a profit share, the students decided to reinvest in a second product. The owner of a candy factory visited to exchange ideas about running a small business related to food, which led to the creation of a schoolwide cookbook of old southern recipes and tips on recycling. This called for computer and proofreading skills, with the final product printed by the Alternative Education School's print shop

The company's slogan was "Recycling the Past into the Future," and profits were sent to a program designed to protect coral reefs. The students decided they enjoyed the learning experience so much that a second edition of the cookbook was planned for the following year.

Their teacher was pleased with the project, too. "I have witnessed students who had no understanding of economic concepts develop into enthusiastically motivated free enterprise entrepreneurs," she commented. It was clear they had learned much more than simply business English.

In this unit, designed for a special education classroom, students developed an understanding of the nature of a market economic system as they began two businesses–paper crafts production and cookbook publishing in the classroom.

The students learned how a market economy answers the economic questions of what to produce, how to produce, and for whom to produce. Basic economic concepts were used to develop financial, marketing, and advertising plans for both businesses. Guest speakers and various media were used in the unit, which also included an emphasis on conservation of natural resources.

Links to National Economics Standards 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14

James Dick

Honorable Mention - Senior High School

One of the senior high honorable mention award-winning units outlined a semester-long macroeconomics course and the concepts underlying economic theory and analysis. The other two presented special topics for a consumer math and an economics class.

These entries shared an emphasis on making economics more interesting to high school students through the development of creative teaching strategies and special activities.

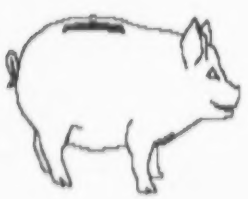
Links to National Economics Standards: All Standards

James Dick

"An Enthusiasm for Economics"

Joan M. Macri
Lewiston High School
Lewiston, Maine

"What do you get when you take a semester course reputed to be difficult and demanding, organize it into 80-minute periods, offer it only in the spring and limit the class to seniors?" asked Joan Macri in describing her macroeconomics class. "No, not 'a disaster' or 'a bad case of senioritis.' The right answer is 'a course in economics in which seniors willingly work extremely hard, learn a great deal, and take pride in what they accomplish.'"



The one-semester course had a "fast and furious pace," because students needed a solid understanding of the concepts and vocabulary, confidence they could succeed in the subject, and enthusiasm for the field of study. Along with textbooks, the class had a subscription to the Wall Street Journal so that they could tie what they learned to current events.

"My students like economics: it does not frighten them!"

Students were required to prepare a semester report on either a local business project or the Chicago Board of Trade Commodity Challenge, with 70% choosing the latter. In it they learned about pricing and the futures markets, the risks of commodity exchanges, and which factors influence supply, demand, and price. A school winner was chosen, and that project was sent on to the state competition. For the eighth year in a row, one of Macri's students, who studied hog futures, won the state award, an all-expense trip to Chicago to experience real life trading at the mercantile exchange.

Students who chose a report on a local business found that the project had to be *perfect* by the time it was completed, since the business kept a copy for its records. This part of the course was especially popular because it introduced business leaders to some of the community's most enthusiastic, committed, bright young people. All students chose teams of two to four players for the Stock Market Game, in which they learned to read financial columns. They also studied comparative economics and traveled to a restaurant for a lesson in entrepreneurship. A visit to the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston included a tour of the check clearing and money processing areas and the chance to see hundreds of thousands of dollars "up close."

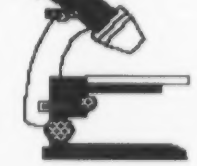
Macri noted happily that absenteeism was not a problem. "This was not a class that was easy to miss–too much took place every day to be easily made up after school." One of her goals, she said, was sharing her love for economics with her students so that they could become well-informed decision makers.

❑

"Bright Ideas: Inventions and Innovations"

Donna Genet
School for Advanced Studies
Miami, Florida

During a four-week period, Donna Genet's high school economics students critically analyzed some of the inventions and innovations that have impacted their own lives.



They listened to guest speakers, discussed new business technologies, and researched selected inventions. Patents, copyrights, and new scientific discoveries provided the background for learning economic concepts, such as factors of production, opportunity cost, supply and demand, and competition. Reports included safety devices in avionics, the internet, cable television, fax machines, cellular phones, and computer hardware and software. Students used audio-visual equipment in presenting the results of their study to the rest of the class.

As a culminating activity, the class held what Genet described as "an extremely successful Inventors and Innovators Fair" for the school's 11th and 12th grades. Turning a school room into an exhibition area, they used mini-stations to display their projects, give demonstrations, and answer questions.

"Throughout the unit," said Genet, "I received positive feedback from my students. In class they paid attention to the guest speakers and videos, liked working together on different assignments, and wisely used class time to plan the fair and their research projects. The high grades they received on their work reflected their involvement in the learning experience." ❑

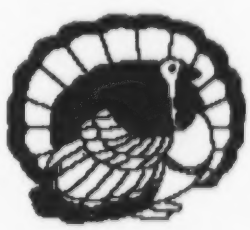
"The Economy is For the Birds"
Doris L. Harsh
Turner Ashby High School
Bridgewater, Virginia

Juniors and seniors in a consumer math class spent a year examining the importance of the poultry industry to their home county, the state of Virginia, the United States, and the global community. The project came about when a nearby farmer was spreading poultry litter on his pasture fields; some students commented that the "aroma" produced should be illegal, and poultry businesses ought to be banned from the area. Teacher Doris Harsh realized that her students did not understand how much the local economy depended on such businesses.

Along with learning about the free enterprise system and the stock market, students conducted a taste test for a local poultry plant, determining that the 450 diners in the school cafeteria preferred to eat pizza topped with turkey ham rather than turkey sausage. They collected recipes using domestic poultry, wild fowl, and exotic bird meats, such as ostrich and emu, creating a cookbook that was sold in the school and the community.

Using statistical tables from the National Turkey Federation, they analyzed their own families' consumption of the poultry and, with the aid of computers, examined national and global trends. Assisting special education students make blubird houses and then building habitats for threatened species of wild birds also contributed to their learning. A local bird-watching club gave them information about bird feeding and counting, and attempts to begin emu farms in the area attracted their attention as well. Indeed, they discovered, the local economy "is for the birds." ❑

"Ideas influence actions, and it is essential for students to be economically literate."



"Economics is the way the public communicates."

Part Five
Open Category
(Multi-grade or Schoolwide)

Full texts of first place through fourth place award-winning projects are available through Interlibrary Loan. Borrow them free through your library. School, college/university, and public libraries provide this service.

The Milner Library at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois, houses the entire collection. (OCLC symbol IAI.) Projects may be requested only through Interlibrary Loan.

Call numbers for Open Category exemplary projects 1995-1996 are:

First Place

Taylor, C. Joyce, & Brenda S. Smith HB74.8.N38o1996T39
T.R.E.E.S. (Treating Resources Economically & Ecologically Smart)

Second Place

Catt, Merrill HB74.8.N38o1996C38
The Cookie Cookin' Kids: Cooking With Economics

Third Place (TIE)

Blackwell, Oma Lea, Andrea Siroonian, Deborah Lynn Seifritz, & Shirley D. Walker
Fayetteville's Fabulous Flicks: HB74.8.N38o1996F39
A Multiple Intelligence Approach to the Teaching of Economics

Third Place (TIE)

Evans, Andrea L., & Theodore Haengel HB74.8.N38o1996E83
Books R Us: A Quality Business Dedicated to Increasing Literacy

1st Place - Open Category

"T.R.E.E.S. (Treating Resources Economically & Ecologically Smart)"

C. Joyce Taylor and Brenda S. Smith
Cook Elementary School
Fort Smith, Arkansas

How many early elementary students can claim that they have created a living legacy for all the future generations who will attend their school? The 600 kindergarten through sixth grade pupils who took part in the "T.R.E.E.S." project can! Their study of forestry and forest ecology resulted in an outdoor nature trail on the school grounds that will serve as a permanent outdoor science laboratory.

The goal of the project was "to understand both sides of the forestry industry–the economic and the ecological," said leaders Joyce Taylor and Brenda Smith. All 25 teachers, other staff members, and school and community patrons took part in what became an exciting, contemporary economic endeavor.

The lessons had been developed at a curriculum writing workshop, sponsored by the state Council on Economic Education and a university center, that one of the Cook teachers had been part of. The school's Economics Committee applied for permission to pilot "Teaching the Economics of Forestry" as a project, with the faculty of each grade level choosing one or more of seven themes for their classes' special concentration. These topics were:

1. Historical significance
   Grades 1 & 4
2. Forestry is a business
   Grades K & 5
3. Products of the forest
   Grades 3 & 4
4. Public and private impact on forestry
   Grade 6
5. Interdependence and the global market
   Grades 2 & 6

6. Forestry and the environment
   Grades 3 & 4
7. Forests for the future
   Grades K & 6

At the same time, everyone in the school examined all seven themes through many schoolwide activities. A third-grader won the logo contest by creating "Woody," a tree character designed to symbolize both hardwood and softwood varieties of trees. It decorated t-shirts, bumper stickers, buttons, a banner, and even a city billboard. Two sixth-graders thought of the name T.A.T. (Totally About Trees) for the school corporation that sold stock and ended up with what several teachers described as "the TREE-mendous sum of more than $5,000 cash flowing through its three bank accounts." Half of that was earned by selling wood products at one of T.A.T.'s marketplaces, a Lumberjack Breakfast in the spring attended by hundreds of people.

The challenge of keeping such a massive program under control was solved by developing a schoolwide timeline that was laminated and posted in the teachers' lounge. Then, as the project evolved, details were added and coordinated. Beginning in January, every class spent one to two hours per week on forestry economics. This time quickly increased, however, as teachers found ways to incorporate the study into other subject areas, such as language arts, science, art, math, and music.

"Production is a very cool thing. We are learning a lot about trees, and we now know that a tree is never wasted," reported one fifth-grade student.

Highlights of Economics Content

In this unit, students in a K-6 elementary school studied forestry economics. Each grade level focused on one or more of the seven themes, such as an historical, geographic, environmental, international, or futurist perspective. The goal was to help students make informed decisions about how to use and conserve this valuable natural resource.

Cooperative learning, team teaching, whole class and individualized instruction, field trips, guest speakers, and in-school small businesses were part of the teaching strategies designed to teach consumer sovereignty, interdependence, and the basic characteristics of market economics.

Various wood-related products were designed and sold that, with other activities, raised funds for the creation of a school nature walk and contributions to a local tornado relief fund. Students demonstrated their understanding of economics at a school assembly, as well as by achieving high test scores.

According to the teachers, T.R.E.E.S. was a viable economics project that was sure to impact participants, helping them to make wiser economic and ecological decisions both now and into the 21st century.

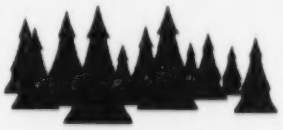
Links to National Economics Standards
1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 14, 16

James Dick

When they learned what was taking place in the school, parents, business leaders, and a forester from the forest industry immediately volunteered to assist with the project, arranging field trips and speakers. The father of a former student who owned a lumber company supplied trees for the nature trail and furnished the lumber for a classroom-size gazebo that would house the science laboratory. One mother carved more than 100 miniature Woody heads and gave them to the sixth grade, where students painted them and created designer pins and earrings.

To kick off their study, the entire student body saw the movie "The Lorax," which presented two different views about trees, ending with the destruction of the forest. As they learned about banking and other essential economic terms and concepts, a reporter from each class contributed articles to the project newspaper, titled T.A.T.tle Tales and edited by a sixth-grader. The paper's staff learned to use a computer program to produce each issue, which was distributed throughout the school to share all the learning taking place.

Field trips included visits to a national forest, an active logging job, and a furniture business. A "Forest of Fame" was created within the school to give the illusion of a forest, and it served as the backdrop for the Lumberjack Breakfast. Walking through the hallway of tree-decorated arches gave visitors the feeling of walking under a canopy of branches in a forest, said one teacher. On the side walls, each grade had space to display student work under the themes their classes had chosen. Green construction paper leaves with names of all the foresters, entrepreneurs, and businesses who had given time and financial support hung from the arches.



The mayor arrived at the breakfast with a proclamation inaugurating the nature/walking trail. A local TV reporter attended the event, and news of the T.R.E.E.S. accomplishment was featured in local papers as well. T.A.T. voted to contribute part of their profits to benefit children left homeless by a tornado, then used the rest for their legacy for the future. The 24 oak trees, 400 pine seedlings, and a dogwood, surrounded by prairie grass and wildflowers, will live on as a testament to a valuable lesson in economics.

A
T.
R. R
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S.

"It didn't take long before we knew
Economics is cool and there's lots we can do
To save our trees, forests, and land,
To give our country a helping hand.
We can recycle, make the most of our trees,
Use our forests for useful things.
If we don't waste our products and goods,
We will save our great big woods."

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2nd Place - Open Category

"The Cookie Cookin' Kids: Cooking With Economics"

Merrill Catt
Weiner Elementary School
Weiner, Arkansas

A part-time speech and language pathologist, Merrill Catt, decided that a cookie factory would give her eight students from grades three through seven a hands-on experience with economics in the "real world." Over the course of the year, as they made and sold products and received recognition from school peers as well as from the community, she noticed something else happen, too.

They began the year as eight frustrated, often ridiculed students, she said, struggling to keep up with their classmates by receiving assistance from every special program offered in the school. Behind in basic skills, they lacked self-esteem and enthusiasm for learning.

What a difference the project made! As school closed for the summer, they had learned much more than economics: they had become dependable, self-confident, hard-working partners whose usual attitudes had changed from "aw, do we have to," to an excited "we can." Though still below the other students academically, they were now better prepared to face the future as productive members of society.

Using cookie graphics from the computer, Catt introduced 30 economic terms all at once at the beginning, promising the class they would learn each one. Children's literature reinforced the concepts, and by November they began baking and selling cookies. They had visited city hall to obtain a business permit and invited the mayor to preside at a ribbon cutting ceremony to open the factory. Everything they learned they shared with the entire school–and when they appeared on local TV to display their products, some of their peers even asked them for their autographs, and wondered how they could get into this special class.

"Teaching economics to my 'special needs' students enables them to understand the REAL world."

The month of February was special. They concentrated on chocolate, learning about its production and studying Pennsylvania entrepreneur Milton Hershey and his company. Discovering that Hershey's street lights are shaped liked Hershey's Kisses they produced one for the hallway to create interest, then conducted a survey to find out the favorite candy bar among elementary students. The cookies produced and sold for Valentine's Day were Double Chocolate Chip, of course. The Christmas feature was gingerbread, while Cookies & Worms were a hit on April Fool's Day.

The business produced cookbooks, too, and over the year sales of books and cookies brought a profit of $1,000, which bought a stove for the school kitchen. No wonder the Cookie Cookin' Kids felt they had had a successful year.

Studying the sources of the ingredients for cookies and producing and selling them were the basis for this yearlong interdisciplinary unit for at-risk language impaired students in grades three to seven.

Trade books were used to teach a host of economic concepts, including scarcity, opportunity cost, supply and demand, factors of production, and markets. Students practiced decision-making as they organized to produce cookies. Entrepreneurship was emphasized throughout the activities, and what kind of cookies to produce gave them another opportunity to make decisions. Milton Hershey's enterprise provided many examples to explore.

Links to National Economics Standards 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 14

James Dick

3rd Place (TIE) - Open Category

"Books R Us: A Quality Business Dedicated to Increasing Literacy"

Andrea L. Evans and Theodore Haengel
Cross Bayou Elementary School
Pinellas Park, Florida

Believing that all students should experience the free enterprise system firsthand led Andrea Evans, teacher of ten visually impaired students, to join forces with fourth-grade teacher Theodore Haengel in a project combining economics concepts, classroom business partnership, and an emphasis on literacy.

While many students have an abundance of books gathering dust at home on shelves, others do not have any books to read at home for pleasure or for school assignments. With nearly half of the school population receiving either free or reduced lunches, the teachers suspected that they probably did not have equal access to books. Repairing books and recycling them to new readers would supplement the School Improvement Plan for increasing literacy through R.E.A.D. (Read, Enjoy, and Discover) and D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything and Read).

After her experience with the project, one student gave her father advertising suggestions when he opened a new restaurant.

Using specialization, the students obtained, repaired, priced, displayed, and sold the donated books, some of which came from businesses while others were given by families and staff members. For each acceptable book, donors received a 10 cents off coupon to use toward the purchase of another book, which might be priced at 10, 25, or 50 cents, or even $1.00, depending on its condition and consumer demand.

The classes met together two or three times each week for the 11 weeks of the project to learn skills, vocabulary, and objectives, as well as to work on the project. Students completed job applications and were videotaped during their job interviews for positions in production, market research, advertising, or bookkeeping. The advertising campaign included a theme song written by the students but often sung in hallways and bathrooms by the rest of the student body.

Even the most needy of the school's students who had no money received books, and a Customer Satisfaction Survey indicated that most customers thought the prices were reasonable. Evans and Haengel were delighted with the project's outcomes, calling it a win-win strategy. Not only were their students eager to learn and experience success, but the company achieved a profit of nearly $400 that was used to purchase holiday toys for those in need.

"Economics and literacy are vital aspects of our lives," said Evans. "Economic growth is affected by literacy, and literacy is affected by economics." Added Haengel: "Economic education is a reality-based, hands-on approach to informing students about life."

A team of fourth-graders and visually impaired students from grades two - five formed a partnership to repair books and devise a marketing plan to sell them. As a result, they became aware of the economic world surrounding them.

In addition to scarcity and other economic concepts, the classes studied the role of price and profit in a market economy, how goods are produced through specialization, the role of government in a market economy, and how to develop a business plan incorporating Edward Denungs' tools for Continual Quality Improvement.

Links to National Economics Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 16

James Dick

3rd Place (TIE) - Open Category

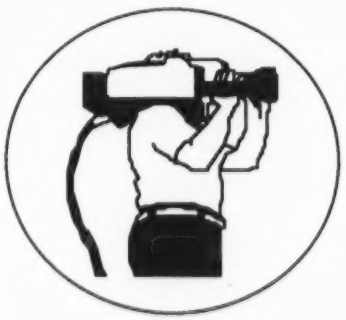
"Fayetteville's Fabulous Flicks: A Multiple Intelligence Approach to the Teaching of Economics"

Oma Lee Blackwell, Andrea Siroonian, Deborah Lynn Seifritz, and Shirley D. Walker
Root Elementary School
Fayetteville, Arkansas

"What's going on this year?" asked surprised parents of 80 third- and fourth-grade students in Fayetteville's Root Elementary School. "The children cannot wait to get to school each day."

What was happening was the teaching of economics through art, music, and drama in the production of a video featuring historic sites in their city: Civil War battlegrounds, stagecoach stops during the westward movement, and the final resting places of national and state heroes.

Dividing the project activities into four phases, teachers followed the theory regarding the seven intelligences identified by Howard Gardner, focusing on decision making and the four factors of production. After several years of baking and selling doughnuts or holding garage sales, the classes offered a community service by researching, writing, and producing the video, titled "A Walking Guide to Historic Fayetteville: Facts, Folklore and 'Fantoms.'" Nineteenth century clothing and props, including a shotgun, pistol, and lanterns, created a touch of reality as students acted out such scenes as an encounter with a ghost and a fancy ball.



The local television manager assisted students in using videocameras, framing shots, and experimenting with zoom techniques. He wondered at the beginning if they were taking on more than they could handle, but by the end he said he was impressed with their ability to pull it off.

"We want our students to feel a part of the community–it is not a 'parents only' domain"

Parents were equally pleased with what their children had learned. One said: "My son knows a lot more about economics than I knew when I graduated from high school," and another commented: "My child has learned to consider all the alternatives before making a decision. That has got to help her all her life."

After completing the video, the students created a brochure, a walking tour map of the dozen historic sites they had featured in the film. Then they made presentations to community members and educational institutions, paid bills, and wrote thank you notes.

"We can only guess what the adult lives of these eight- and nine-year-old children will be like," wrote the teachers. "What we do know is that the need to be effective problem solvers will still be necessary." Participation in the "flick" project could only help them prepare for tomorrow.

Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences was the organizing device for this interdisciplinary unit designed to teach basic economics concepts and decision-making skills to third- and fourth-grade students.

Following the mastery of scarcity, opportunity cost, goods and services, interdependence, and factors of production, through the use of a wide variety of teaching strategies, students worked in groups to plan, produce, and market a videotape on the history of their community. Copies of the video were presented to elementary school and public libraries, a local museum, and the Chamber of Commerce.

Links to National Economics Standards 1, 2, 3, 6

James Dick

Honorable Mention - Open Category

There were three approaches to teaching economics across several elementary/intermediate grades used in the open category: studying the local community and the state, having high school students serve as teachers, and developing classroom entrepreneurs.

Economic games, stories, and cooperative learning were strategies that emphasized scarcity, specialization, and production. Producing and selling goods enabled classroom entrepreneurs to become more familiar with basic economic concepts. Using older students to develop and teach economic lessons benefited both sides in the teaching/learning relationship

Links to National Economics Standards 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14

James Dick

"An Alternative Approach to Teaching Economics: Talking Trash"
Judith A. Fortner
Elm Street Center Alternative School
and Ellen Taylor
Frank Tillery Elementary School
Rogers, Arkansas

When 13 alternative education students with low self-esteem became peer teachers to 56 fifth- and sixth-graders, it affected many lives–including their own. One goal of teachers Judith Fortner and Ellen Taylor was to develop a sense of community spirit and caring for the future environment by researching the use of their beautiful Ozark countryside for landfill sites, along with studying scarcity problems.

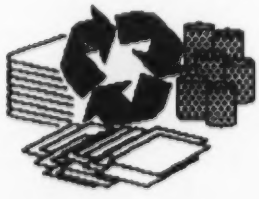
The "Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle" theme lent itself to nontraditional teaching methods, and as the high school students learned economics they prepared lessons they thought would appeal to elementary students. The Peer Teachers presented a lesson to the entire group; then each worked with a smaller group of the younger students. Activities consisted of journal entries, oral review of economic terms, economics games, or a discussion of what had been learned. This was an enriching experience for both groups according to Fortner, as they became acquainted with one another and made plans for a joint Arts & Crafts Trash Fair.

The project received media attention, with representatives from both schools being interviewed on a radio program the rest of their peers listened to.

"The best way to keep one's problems from looking so big is to focus on helping others."

The emphasis on economics and environmentalism made a difference in the entire community.

The project ended with an "Economic STARS Award Banquet," when students from each school honored those from the other. It was an emotional experience, and some found it hard to say goodbye. "I am positive," said Fortner, "that the memories of the economics taught and the economics learned will endure." ❑



"Cruising with Casper"
Elaine H. White, Terrye Y. Howell, Tamra Vaughan, and Cathy Williams
Spook Hill Elementary School
Lake Wales, Florida

Wanting their students to understand how a city can profit from its uniqueness, third- and fourth-grade teachers at a school near a tourist attraction designed a project that combined economic ideas with community involvement. Students toured the city and listened to guest speakers to research unique sites of the area, then developed an economic activities book based on that information. Next they sold products to visiting tourists, making a profit of over $550. Finally, they voted to invest the money they earned in the welfare of the community by purchasing and donating packets of books for mothers of newborn babies, so that they could begin reading to their children at an early age.

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"Teaching economics enables students to practice life skills in real world situations."

The teachers agreed on the importance of enabling their students to feel connected to the real world, with a part to play in the free enterprise system as both producers and consumers. Economics was introduced into every part of the curriculum: by writing thank you notes to speakers and advertisers, reading books on banking and brochures on the city, writing checks and making graphs, and writing stories and illustrating economic concepts on the computer.

"The biggest lesson my son learned was that economics can be fun," wrote one parent. "He also learned that setting up a business is a lot of work. I think it is great that the children found out what it takes to make money."

❑

"Econ Buddies"
Kathryn Ratte'
Chatfield Senior High School
Carina O'Hayre, Debra D. Kamens, Mary C. Thomas
Ute Meadows Elementary School
Littleton, Colorado

"Econ Buddies" was a cooperative, interactive, multiage exploration between 56 high school seniors and 110 first- and second-graders of four fundamental economics concepts: scarcity, choice, cost, and the mutually beneficial nature of voluntary trade. The teachers believed that interaction among students of different ages and abilities can benefit all of them, and that students learn best by helping others to learn.

The older students first rewrote fairy tales and other popular children's literature to emphasize the basic economic concepts they contained. Next they taught these ideas to their Buddies, helping them stage the tales for their schoolmates and parents. Finally, all of the students brought items made in other countries to trade with one another. Seniors then helped the younger students understand why people all over the world engage in trade.

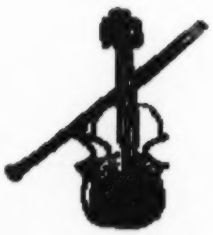
Everyone seemed to agree it was a worthwhile experience. "Overall," said one senior, "we were incredibly impressed with the activity. It helped us to make sure we know exactly what the economic principles are."

❑

"Symbolic Economics"
Marcia Grant and Victoria Mercing
Ringgold Elementary School
Benton, Arkansas

The nine symbols used by the state of Arkansas include a diamond, a bee, the fiddle, and the apple blossom, and each year, elementary students are given a color booklet and are required to color them correctly. Their response, according to teachers Marcia Grant and Victoria Mercing, is "Oh no, not again."

GREAT DAY



The two decided to create interst in this study by teaching their students how these symbols represent economic concepts in the state. They used economic games, stories, assembly lines, cooperative learning, and decision making to show how the symbols and the economy affect students in everyday life.

For example, diamonds represented scarcity, bees taught them about specialization and assembly lines, the fiddle performs a service and helped them understand money and tourism, and apple blossoms are a natural resource that can bring profits to entrepreneurs.

As they ended their study, the classes decided to sponsor a "Festival of Arkansas Symbols" so that they could share what they learned with others. They had an informational booth and a game for every symbol, using Arkansas products as prizes. Even students who previously had behavior problems worked hard to make the festival succeed.

A comment the two teachers heard during the nine weeks of the project was, "We haven't worked all week." Grant and Mercing decided this was a positive response, because "when students are having so much fun learning that they do not realize they are learning, the teachers have won–and the students have won. What a great feeling!"

❑

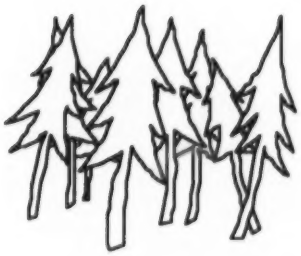
"Thinking Through Economics: Economics Through Thinking"
Julie Lamb-Milligan and Tammy Booth
Northeast Arkansas School District
Paragould, Arkansas

When Advanced Learning Program facilitators Julie Lamb-Milligan and Tammy Booth designed a program to encourage higher order thinking skills among all second-, third-, and fourth-grade students in their school district, they chose economics as the topic for the year-long instruction.

The 522 students and their teachers played "wheel of fortune" on economic concepts to warm up creative and economic thinking, solved mysteries, brainstormed to invent businesses, listened to visiting stock brokers and bankers explain entrepreneurship and investments, and produced items to be sold at a "Day at the Market." In April they also learned about taxes in a project filmed by a local television station.

In a lesson at the end of the year titled "Money Isn't Everything," students decided to use the $500 profit from their market for a "shopping spree" to benefit residents in three retirement homes in the community. Class representatives delivered baskets filled with games, flowers, bingo prizes, candy, and craft items, a final result of a year spent "thinking through economics."

❑



" 'Tree'mendous Economics"
Holly Cady, Linda Lee, Marsha Strange, and Anna Yarberry
Robert L. Davis Elementary School
Bryant, Arkansas

Thousands of manufacturing jobs are involved in Arkansas' wood products industry, and the third- and fourth-grade students in this project spent a year studying the economics of forestry, caring for trees, and conservation of natural resources. Literature and music about trees and the forest introduced economic concepts, and books, videos, guest speakers, field trips, and forest lessons added enrichment, demonstrating how much we depend on trees in our daily lives.

Classes sponsored a Christmas tree competition, held an Earth Day, sold seedlings to raise funds for planting trees at a nature trail, and marketed wooden products. Some of the $1,300 profit went to Ouachita National Forest in memory of Oklahoma City bombing victims and part bought tree-related literature for a children's hospital.

"By teaching our students how to care for the forest, our goal is that we will secure a supply of wood to serve the needs of the next generation," said the teachers.

❑

"Wagon Traders"
Teri R. Ferry, Patrica T. Shanyfelt, and Patrice S. Morton
Garrison-Jones Elementary School
Palm Harbor, Florida

As part of a schoolwide classroom business program, Pre-Kindergartners sold handmade marble painted bookmarks, fourth-graders designed doorknob hanger messages, and the Specific Learning Disabilities "Dream Team" marketed dream bracelets.

Created to provide students with opportunities to learn the economic concepts, behaviors, attitudes, and skills needed for success in the 21st century, the project focused on cooperative ventures and quality processes.

"Picture four-year-olds surveying potential customers on a possible price for their products."

From diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and including different learning styles, the Wagon Traders learned to value one another and work together to succeed in achieving their goals. They also decided to give back to the community by using their profits to help prepare food pantry baskets during the holiday season.

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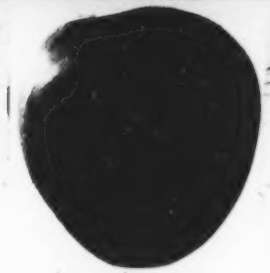

Winning entries in the thirty-fourth annual National Awards for Teaching Economics. Innovative and effective ways to relate economic principles to students' experiences and understanding.

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